

UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE



3 1761 04051 5249

JOHN M. KELLY LIBRARY



Donated by
**The Redemptorists of
the Toronto Province**
from the Library Collection of
Holy Redeemer College, Windsor

University of
St. Michael's College, Toronto

HOLY REDEEMER LIBRARY, WINDSOR

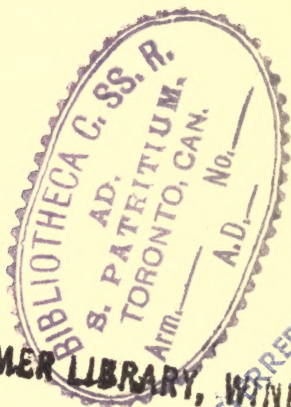
TRANSFERRED



The Mercies of the Sacred Heart

TWELVE SERMONS FOR THE FIRST FRIDAYS

BY THE
VERY REV. ALEX MAC DONALD, D.D.



HOLY REDEEMER LIBRARY, WINDSOR
TRANSFERRED

NEW YORK
JOSEPH F. WAGNER



Nihil Obstat

REMIGIUS LAFORT, S.T.L.

Censor Librorum

Imprimatur

✠ JOANNES M. FARLEY, D.D.

Archiepiscopus

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 5, 1903.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
I. The Devotion to the Sacred Heart	1
II. The Morning Offering	6
III. The Agonizing Heart (<i>Passiontide</i>)	10
IV. Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (<i>May</i>)	15
V. The Heart of Jesus, a Burning Furnace of Charity	20
VI. Reparation	25
VII. The Heart of Jesus, the Well-spring of Life and Holiness	29
VIII. The Divine Model of Meekness and Humility	34
IX. The Lord of the Sacred Heart, the Bread of the Soul.....	38
X. Our Sure Refuge in the Hour of Death.....	43
XI. The Model and Patron of Lovers of the Sacred Heart (<i>St.</i> <i>Joseph</i>)	48
XII. Gratitude to God	52

The Mercies of the Sacred Heart.

A Course of Twelve Sermons.

I. THE DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART.

SYNOPSIS.—Every Catholic devotion is founded on some central truth of our religion. Devotion to Sacred Heart, founded on the doctrine of the Incarnation. Three things distinguished in all devotion: (a) The homage. (b) The object. (c) The motive. The first requires knowledge and moral goodness. Difficulty of awakening devotion towards purely sensible things. Sensible or material object required to act on the heart. (b) The most perfect object of devotion is the Sacred Heart. Reasons why the Heart of Christ was chosen for adoration: (1) Christ willed it. (2) Heart is great sustainer of life. (3) It is considered as symbol and seat of all real love. (c) Motive of this devotion is Charity. The Sacred Heart makes God's love more visible; helps man to realize this love more fully and urges him to greater gratitude; furnishes us with means of fulfilling precept of Charity. (d) Christ is our truest friend; hence all should go to Him for refuge, for strength, for salvation. Heed His invitation.

Catholic devotion is the loving homage paid to a sacred object as seen in the light of faith. It is, in its last analysis, the outgrowth and living expression of Catholic dogma. It has its seat in the heart and its root in the intellect. It grows out of divine truth, and is nurtured by divine love, as the flower is nurtured by the warm sunshine.

Now the truth out of which the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus grows is the central truth of the Christian religion, the Incarnation of the Son of God. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us, and we saw his glory, the glory as it were of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John i. 14).

The Word was made flesh—this, I say, is the central truth of Christianity, and it is the source whence springs the devotion to

the Sacred Heart. The Son of God became Man without ceasing to be God. He is true God and true Man in one Divine Person. Begotten of the Father before all ages, true God of true God, co-equal with the Father, in the fulness of time He took upon Himself our nature in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and was made man of her. He took to Himself a body and soul, and became as one of us in all save sin.

The body and soul that the Son of God thus assumed became, in the strictest and most real sense, His own body and His own soul. The human nature of Our Lord had no personality of its own. It subsisted, as theologians phrase it, in the personality of the Eternal Word. The body of the Virgin's Son was truly the body of God the Son, and the soul of the Virgin's Son was truly the soul of God the Son. The face that looked into the faces of men was the face of God; the lips that spoke as no man spake before or since were the lips of God; the hands that healed the sick were the hands of God; the feet that were nailed to the cross were the feet of God; and the heart that was pierced with a lance was the heart of God. The loving homage that we pay to that Divine Heart is, therefore, a real profession of faith in the mystery of the Incarnation. The word Incarnate must needs have a heart of flesh, and this heart of flesh is worthy of divine worship because it is the Heart of God.

In devotion, or religious homage, we may distinguish three things: 1. The homage itself; 2. Its object; 3. Its motive. To put this in another way: we may consider the one who offers homage, that to which it is offered, and the reason that leads to its being offered.

As regards the first, it is only rational beings that are capable of devotion. Devotion supposes a knowledge of its object and a sense of the object's moral worth. "As well can there be filial love without the fact of a father," says Newman, "as devotion without the fact of a Supreme Being," and, of course, the consciousness of that fact. It is only improperly, or by a figure of speech, that we attribute devotion to the lower animals, and speak, for instance, of a dog's devotion to its master. The animal has, indeed, a sense of its master's kindness, but it has no sense of his moral goodness. A very bad man may be very good to his dog, and so awaken in the brute a sort of devotion to his person—not because he is good himself, but because he is good to the dog.

It is with true devotion as with true love, for the two are closely united. It is not so much the kindness received that awakens

devotion as the consciousness that it was prompted by an unselfish motive and that back of the kindness there is moral worth. Man is thus capable of devotion because he can weigh motives, and is consciously influenced by motives, and can discern that which is morally good. And in the measure that one realizes the moral goodness and beauty of an object will one's devotion to it be lively. If the object is purely spiritual, one of which we can form no sensible image, it does not awaken a lively devotion in the great mass of men. There are very few who practise devotion to the Blessed Trinity, or to the Holy Ghost, or even to the angels, because the Trinity is a mystery so far beyond the reach of the human mind, and the Holy Ghost is a pure spirit, and the angels are pure spirits, and few men can get beyond material and sensible things, or realize things of a purely spiritual nature.

On the other hand, devotion to the saints, to the Blessed Virgin, to our divine Lord, is common among all classes of the faithful. These are objects of devotion that can easily be brought home to all, be they ever so ignorant and unspiritual. And this was one main reason why the Son of God became man, that He might bring Himself within the reach of His creatures, win His way to their hearts, and awaken devotion to His person.

Of all devotions that have some sensible or material thing for their object, the most perfect is the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The reason is, first, that the homage we pay to it is divine, it being the Heart of a Divine Person. Again, it is itself the most perfect object, and sets before us the highest and holiest and most perfect motive to inspire devotion. The Sacred Heart of our Saviour is the fountain of every grace and spiritual blessing. From it the saints have drawn. Out of it the Blessed Virgin has received the fulness of grace. And as the fountain is greater than the streamlets that flow from it, so is the Sacred Heart of Jesus incomparably greater and more perfect as an object fitted to stir our devotion than any other object of which we can form a sensible image.

It may be asked why the Heart of the Saviour should be chosen as a special object of devotion. First of all, because such is His own will as revealed to Blessed Margaret Mary. "Behold the Heart," were His words to this privileged soul, "which hath so much loved men, which hath spared nothing, even to exhausting itself and consuming itself in order to give them testimony of its love; and in return I often receive only ingratitude, by the irrever-

ence and the sacrileges, and by the coldness and contempt they have for Me in this Sacrament of Love. What giveth Me most pain is that among them there are hearts consecrated to Me. Therefore I ask of thee that the first Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi may be set apart as a particular feast to honor My Heart, by receiving Communion on that day and making a solemn act of reparation for the insults it hath received."

Apart, however, from our Lord's own desire, there are reasons that make His Heart peculiarly worthy of special devotion. In the first place, the heart is the source of man's life-blood. At every throb it sends the blood coursing through the veins to give new life and vigor to man. The Sacred Heart is thus the fountain of the Precious Blood, which is the price of our redemption. Again, the heart of man is associated in our ideas with his moral character. We say of a man that he has a good heart, or a hard heart, or a corrupt heart. And as a hard heart repels us, and a corrupt heart excites our loathing, so a good heart wins our love and veneration. And if so, how much more should the Heart of our Saviour, the most tender and loving of all hearts, inspire us with devotion. Lastly, by the consent of mankind, expressed in the received usage of every tongue, the heart is the seat and symbol of love. Hence God Himself says in Holy Writ: "My son, give me thy heart," and, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart."

This brings us to the motive of the devotion, which is charity, the purest and most perfect of all motives, as this virtue is the most perfect of all virtues. "Now there remain faith, hope, and charity, these three," says the apostle, "but the greatest of these is charity." The Beloved Disciple tells us that "God is Love." And it was to make known His love for men that God sent His Son into the world. For "God so loved the world as to send his only Son, that all who believed in him should not perish, but should have life everlasting." From the first God loved man, whom He made in His own image and likeness, but not from the first was man so sensible of God's love for him; not from the first could man fully realize the love of God for him; not from the first was that love made visible to man and almost palpable. In the Sacred Heart of Jesus the human and the divine for the first time met in the unity of one Person, and were blended in a most perfect love. It is a human as well as a divine love; it is a sensible love; it is a love of sympathy.

Thus, while the Sacred Heart is the object of our devotion, its

love is the motive that prompts devotion. "I came," He tells us Himself, "to cast a fire upon earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?" When Our Lord appeared to Blessed Margaret Mary, He showed her His Heart, surrounded, as it were, with flames. Our aim, then, in practising this devotion, is to make some return of love for the love He has shown us. Devotion to the Sacred Heart is really devotion to the love of the Incarnate God.

This devotion furnishes us with a means of fulfilling the great precept of charity. It is a simple and easy way of fulfilling the precept, a way suited to our nature, for it sets vividly and sensibly before us the motive of perfect charity, which is the love of God for us made manifest in the wounded Heart of His Son. It sets before us, at the same time, the model of perfect charity, since "greater love than this no man hath, that he lay down his life for his friend."

Happy those who by their devotion win the love and friendship of this divine Heart! It will be, as He has promised, their sure refuge in life, and especially at the hour of death. The friendship of the great ones of this world is dearly bought, and when gained is often not worth the having. Human friendship is uncertain and unstable. Friends here below may fall away and fail us when we need them most. Here is One whose friendship is of priceless worth, who will enrich us with every gift, who will stand by us even if all the world should forsake us, whose Heart is open to be our refuge when the storm of affliction sweeps over our souls. Let us draw near to Him, then, and seek Him often in the sacrament of His love. "Come to me," He tells us, "all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." Let us heed this sweet invitation, and in the day of trial, when our hearts are heavy, let us come and kneel before the altar where the Heart of our loving Saviour is ever pleading for us. Let us put Him in mind of His promise—awaken Him with our prayers, as did the disciples on the storm-tossed lake, that He may once more still the wild waves and bring to troubled souls a great calm.

II.

THE MORNING OFFERING IN THE LEAGUE OF THE SACRED HEART.

SYNOPSIS.—Nature testifies to the truth of the old saying: "In union there is strength." This principle holds good likewise in the order of grace: hence its operation in the League of the Sacred Heart. Twofold object of the League. Its three degrees. Testimony of Leo XIII. in favor of League. Benefits in the spiritual order. Union of prayer for all. Gives proper spirit and intention to every act of the day. Helps man to build for eternity. Man a pilgrim. This union keeps his mind on his true home and causes him always to tend to that home.

Conclusion.—Be faithful to so simple a duty!

"In union is strength." It is an old, old saying, that has found a home in every language and left its mark on the history of every nation. Nor is the working of the principle which it embodies confined alone to human society. It makes its influence felt in every order of created beings. The tiny drops of rain from the clouds unite to form the mountain torrent, which sweeps down upon the plain, attesting the force of union by the destruction it deals on every side. The creatures that have life feel by an instinct of their nature that union is an essential condition of survival in the struggle for existence. Throughout nature union is ever the source of growth in power; disunion the prelude to decay.

If union is needful to achieve great results in the order of nature, it may be expected to be so likewise in the order of grace. The League of the Sacred Heart is the outgrowth of a practical recognition of this fact. The end here aimed at is the salvation of souls; the means of gaining it is the grace of God to be sought by prayer; the efficacy of the pleading power of prayer is derived from the union of voices and hearts. So far all is plain. But just here a difficulty presents itself. Are not the voices of all the children of the Church already united in prayer? Were they not so united before this League was ever thought of? Have not the faithful in every age cried out to their Father, who is in heaven, as Christ Himself has taught them, "Give us this day our daily bread?" Quite so. But how many Christians utter these words of the Our Father in the broad, all-embracing spirit in which they were first conceived and spoken? We may safely say that the average Christian, in repeat-

ing them, does not look beyond his own personal needs, or the needs of a narrow circle of relations and friends. And yet it is the spirit, the intention that fixes the meaning and comprehension of the us and the our. One aim, then, of this League is to get Christians to realize that, having God for their Father and the Church for their Mother, they are all members of one great family, and that, therefore, each has a claim to the prayers of all, as all have to the prayers of each.

But something further is needed to make prayer efficacious. It is that the faithful should address their petitions to the Father in the name of His Son, our Saviour. "Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you" (John xvi. 23). Now this is, if we may so say, the first plank in the platform of this League. It is a League of zeal and prayer in union with the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It seeks to unite the prayers of men with the pleadings of that Heart which is present on our altars, "ever living to make intercession for us" (Heb. vii. 25). It has thus a twofold object: to band men together in a holy alliance of prayer for the salvation of souls and to advance the interests and spread the devotion of the Sacred Heart. It has three degrees. The first includes those who add to their morning prayers an offering of the work, prayers, and sufferings of the day for the intentions of the Sacred Heart; the second, those who offer daily a decade of the Rosary for the intention assigned each month, and the third, those who offer monthly a communion of atonement. The practice of the first degree is the only one essential to membership; that of the other two is purely optional.

Of this League Leo XIII. has said: "It is so beautiful, and unites such exceeding fruitfulness with such simplicity as surely to merit all the encouragement which ecclesiastical authority can give it." In this age of ours, when men are too busy, too engrossed with worldly things, to give much time to prayer, it is difficult to overestimate the advantage of being enrolled in this League. It imposes no obligation save such as anyone can fulfil with the greatest ease; for the morning offering is the one essential practice, and this can be made in a few words, or even in thought only, nor does it bind any one on pain of sin. It turns every action not in itself sinful, and every suffering, into a prayer, and thus enables men to obey the apostolic injunction to pray without ceasing. It gives a new title to the friendship of our Lord, an added merit to every good work,

a greater efficacy to our prayers from union with the prayers of the unnumbered millions throughout all the world who join in the morning offering.

This morning offering, so easy is it and so simple that it might seem as if it could not be of much account. Yet, if it is made as it ought to be made, thoughtfully, earnestly, piously, it is most pleasing to God, and lends a new, I had almost said divine, value and dignity to every action of the day. This appears from what has already been said. Let me try to make it plainer still.

God, the all-good and all-wise, has created nothing in vain. All things He has made for a purpose; to every creature He has appointed an end which it is to work out for itself. The creatures that are below man in the scale of being have a merely natural end, which they work out by their natural powers and attain in this world itself. The earth moves on its orbit day after day, achieving by a law of its nature and necessarily the end for which God has made it. And so the things that are upon the earth, the elements, air, fire, water, work out their several ends by a law of their being, and necessarily. The animals, in like manner, that are below man, creatures of sense but without reason, are guided by an instinct which the Creator has implanted in them to do the work and reach the end He has appointed to each. The bird builds its nest and the bee its hive, carrying out with wonderful skill a plan that neither has devised. But they can do no higher work than this, nor seek a higher end, nor have they higher aspirations. They build for time; their work is of the earth, and for an earthly end; they know not and can not know the good God who has made them, though they do know, in some sort, some at least of the good things that He has made.

Man alone, of all the creatures that are upon the earth, made in God's own image and likeness, can know this God who made him. Man alone can know the goodness of God, and knowing His goodness love Him, and loving Him seek after Him as his last end. Man alone, of all the creatures that are upon the earth, has a capacity for happiness that no earthly good can fill. Therefore is man made for a higher than an earthly end, in token of which, while the other animals stoop to the earth as made for the earth only, man bears himself erect, and gazes upward as one born for a higher than an earthly end and fitted for a nobler destiny; as one who has not here a lasting city, but seeks a city in the skies. Man alone builds for

eternity ; not as the bird and the bee build their homes of earth that soon crumble, but a building of God and a house not made with hands.

Still, man can build for time, and does build for time. But if he build for time only, he will not, when time has run its course, have that building of God which the apostle speaks of. Man is a free agent. If he determines to work for time only and work only for a worldly end, he is free to do so, and if he choose to build for eternity, by the grace of God, he is free to do so, too. But every man on the face of the earth, every man who has the use of reason, is either building for time only, or he is building for eternity. "He who is not with me," says our Blessed Lord, "is against me." And the difference between these two is a difference of intention. For every deliberate act of a man's life, everything that he does with knowledge and the free consent of his will, is ordered to some end, to some last end, and if the last end for which he works, the end to which he refers all his acts, be worldly happiness merely, he is building for time ; if, on the other hand, it be happiness in heaven, he is building for eternity. And the very same act, such as the giving of an alms to a poor person or a cup of cold water to a stranger, is worldly if done for a worldly end, and will have but a worldly reward ; is heavenly if done for a heavenly end, and will have a heavenly reward.

It is not then of little account, it is not a thing to be made light of, this offering of our work and prayers and sufferings day by day, morning by morning, for the intentions of the Sacred Heart. With God it is the intention that counts. This simple offering, therefore, lends to our most trivial acts a special value in the eyes of God and gives them a title to a heavenly reward. This is why so much stress is laid on the making of the morning offering. It begets the habit of ordering all our acts aright, of referring all that we do or suffer to the glory of God and the salvation of our souls.

Here below we are but pilgrims, exiles from our true home. Let us take a leaf from the pilgrim's book. Let us learn a lesson from the pilgrim, weary of travel in a strange land, when his heart begins to hunger for the old familiar places, and he turns his steps homeward. Day after day, he takes up his journey ; morning after morning, when he awakes, his first thought is of the home to which he is ever drawing nearer, and the first thing he does is to make up his mind to resume his journey. This thought of home, this making up

of his mind, is his morning offering of acts, ordering them to a certain end. Even if he think no more of home during the day, the intention that he starts out with in the morning lives and operates in every act that he does, in every step that he takes, and by night-fall he finds himself so many miles nearer to the home of his heart. Let us exiles from our heavenly home, after the manner of this pilgrim, morning by morning, offer our work and prayers and sufferings to the Heart of Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, to the Heart of Him without whom we can do nothing, in whom we can do all things, that He may keep our steps, and guide us in the way, and lead us on,

O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till the night is gone;
And with the morn those angel faces smile,
Which we, too, have loved long since, and lost awhile.

III. THE AGONIZING HEART OF JESUS.

"O all ye who pass by the way, attend and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow."—Lam. i. 12.

SYNOPSIS.—*Sacred Heart spoken of as "Victim for Sinners"—"Propitiation for our Sins"—Sacred Heart in the Passion—Narration of events of Passion. Lessons: 1. The heinousness of sin. 2. The love of Sacred Heart for sinners. This love, as revealed in the Passion: (a) An unselfish love; (b) A generous love; (c) An all embracing love.*

Conclusion.—*Be mindful during Holy Week of the sufferings and love of the Sacred Heart, and pray for grace to hate sin and to love God.*

In the Litany of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, approved by the Holy See for use in the public worship of the Church, we invoke the Sacred Heart as the "victim for sinners," and the "propitiation for our sins." In our sorrows and our trials we fly to the Heart of Him who for us sinners was "filled with reproaches," bruised for our iniquities," and "made obedient unto death," even the death of the cross; to the Heart that, after it ceased to beat, was "pierced with a lance," and yielded up the last drop of its blood for love of us. Now, in this Passiontide, it would seem to be the least we could do by way of making some return for the love He has shown us, to call to mind and dwell upon all that He has suffered for us. "O all ye who pass by the way," we seem to hear Him call to us in plaintive tones from the tabernacle, as we go by the Church in this time that is sacred to His Passion, "come and see if there be sorrow like unto my sorrow."

To-day we will think upon the sorrows of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, whose soul was made sorrowful for us even unto death. And perhaps in no way can we better or more fittingly do this than by calling to mind, and fixing the eyes of the spirit upon, the scenes that are made familiar to us in the sorrowful mysteries of the Rosary. We shall thus perform an acceptable act of devotion also to that sweet Virgin Mother through whose own soul, as we are reminded on this very day, even for the seventh time the sword of sorrow passed.

Behold, then, the Son of Man in the garden. Thrice He prays to His Father that the chalice of the Passion may pass from Him. But there comes up before Him the pitiful sight of a whole race doomed to perish should that chalice pass, and each time He adds: "Not my will but thine be done." For the sake of sinners whom He came to save He must drink the bitter chalice to the dregs. And now He is in an agony. The multiplied sins of men, from the first sin committed in Eden down to the last that a child of Adam will commit, rise before Him. Nay, they are placed upon His shoulders, for He is "made sin" for us; they cover Him as with a leprous cloak; He falls under their weight to the ground, and the Precious Blood trickles to the earth from every pore. Presently there is heard along the slope of the Mount of Olives the tramp of armed men. The figure of a man comes forward through the gloom and salutes the Saviour with a kiss. It is the traitor Judas, and the kiss is the token of betrayal. Forthwith a murderous rabble rush upon the innocent Lamb of God; they seize Him and drag Him from the garden.

All this is but the prelude to the scenes that are to follow. Bloodthirsty men are gathered round our gentle Lord like wolves around their prey. They strip off His clothes; they tie Him to a post; they ply Him with cruel scourges. The blood gushes forth at every stroke. Fresh men take the place of those that are weary with that awful work; stripe is added to stripe, until no part of the skin is left whole, and that sacred body is one bleeding mass. He is become, indeed, such as the prophet foresaw Him from afar, "the most abject of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity;" nay, "a worm," indeed, "and no man."

But more suffering, deeper ignominy awaits Him. Our redemption is not to be so lightly wrought; not so easily are the sins of the race of men to be wiped out. Again His executioners

gather round Him—the whole band, St. Matthew tells us. Rude soldiers, with heartless cruelty in their eyes and ribald jests upon their lips, lay hold of the mangled Lamb of God. Once more they strip Him of the garments which now cleave to His torn flesh. In mockery they put upon Him a purple cloak, and place a reed in His hand for a sceptre. Then, plating a crown of thorns, they press it down upon His head; they bend the knee before Him in derision, and hail the Victim of their brutal sport as King of the Jews. Again is He led before the tribunal of Pilate, who, thinking to move the Jews to pity at the sight, points to the torn and bleeding Saviour, saying: Behold the Man. As well might he hope to move the very stones to pity as those hearts that are hardened with hate. “Crucify Him!” they cry out with one voice. The craven Roman, degenerate scion of an imperial race, is overawed by the clamor of that rabble. He delivers Jesus into the hands of the Jews.

The sins of each one of us cried out by the mouths of those monsters before the judgment-seat of Pilate. Therefore does the avenging wrath of God still follow the Victim who, for others’ guilt, must be led as a lamb to the slaughter. The heavy cross is laid upon His shoulders, and, in the fourth scene, we follow Him in spirit, with Mary, His mother, and the other heartbroken women, along the dolorous way. He is led forth between two malefactors. Again and again He falls beneath His load, and as often is the scourge applied to Him as to a brute beast to make Him proceed with His burden. The whole way to the summit of Calvary is dyed with His Blood.

And now comes the last and saddest scene of all. The Divine Victim, stripped once more of His garments, is laid upon the altar of sacrifice. His hands and feet are fastened with nails to the wood. The cross is lifted from the ground, it falls into its place, and the Son of God is left to hang upon it between two thieves until every drop of blood flows from His body and the Heart of the world’s Saviour ceases to beat. The Mother stands by, her soul pierced with a sword of sorrow as she gazes upon that form, once the most beautiful among the sons of men, now hanging mangled and lifeless before her.

Even dumb nature gives signs of woe. The sun hides his face, dense darkness steals over the earth, and the rocks are riven asunder. But the Jews, with hearts harder than the rocks, stand there unmoved, types, alas! of so many Christians who heap sin

upon sin, crucifying afresh the Son of God, so far as in them lies, without remorse or repentance.

Untold agony our Divine Lord bore in His body on the tree. But it was as nothing compared with the agony He suffered in His soul. He sees Himself deserted by His loved disciples, given over to the scorn and insult of His enemies, and seemingly abandoned even by His Father in heaven. And, bitterest thought of all, He sees the souls redeemed by Him, the souls for whom He is shedding His blood to the last drop, and who, in spite of this, will go down impenitent, like the leaves in autumn, countless in their multitude, into eternal death. This is the last drop in that bitter chalice of woe which was offered to Him in the garden, and which, for love of us, He consented to drink to the last dregs.

What, now, are the lessons we may gather from the Passion? Many lessons there are, but two stand out prominently: the heinousness of sin, and the love of the Sacred Heart for sinners. What more forcibly than the sufferings of the Son of God can bring home to us the heinousness of our sins? With a word of His mouth He created the world; to redeem the world from sin He is fastened to a cross and sheds the last drop of His blood. It is not the treason of Judas, nor the envy of the Jewish priests, nor the fickleness of the mob, nor the miscarriage of justice, nor the barbarity of His executioners; it is not any of these, nor all of these together; it is our sins that nail His hands and feet to the cross, and even in death pierce His heart with a lance. And yet we go from day to day and from year to year, piling sin upon sin, as though it were a light matter to drive once more into that adorable head the cruel thorns and crucify again the world's Saviour. Let us learn from the contemplation of His sufferings, in pity for the bleeding Lamb of God, in pity for the Heart that was pierced for us with a lance, in pity for that Mother, His and ours, whose own soul was transfixed with sorrow, in pity for our own immortal souls, to crucify those unruly passions within us that are the sources of our sins, to curb our lusts, to bridle our tongues, and to live justly, soberly and godly in this world, looking forward, with the apostle, to the blessed hope.

The other lesson that we may learn is the love of the Sacred Heart for sinners. The Son of God was offered because He willed, and He willed because, "having loved His own that are in the world, He loved them to the end"—loved them even to the death

of the cross. "Greater love than this hath no man," He tells us Himself, "that one should lay down one's life for one's friends." He laid down His for His enemies, that so they might be made His friends. And this love of the Sacred Heart, as revealed in the Passion, was an unselfish love, a generous love, an all-embracing love. It was unselfish. He would suffer all Himself. "If therefore, you seek me, let these go away" (John xviii. 8). Again, He felt more keenly the evils that were to come upon Jerusalem than the torment and shame He was Himself to endure. "Weep not for me," He said to the women of Jerusalem, "but for yourselves and for your children." It was, at the same time, a generous love. On the cross, in the midst of His torments, He prayed for those who were crucifying Him: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." It was, in fine, an all-embracing love. If the love of the Sacred Heart went out even to those who were nailing Him to the cross, how much more to those who are guiltless of so enormous a crime. Nor was this divine love confined to the men of His own country or of His own age; it reached out to all mankind and to all ages.

Let us, then, remember during Passiontide, how "God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son, that all who believe in Him should not perish, but should have life everlasting." And let us ponder deeply the love for us which consumed the Sacred Heart of God's only-begotten Son. For love of us the King of heaven becomes an outcast upon earth; for love of us He is born in a stable; for love of us He bears hunger and thirst, and passes sleepless nights in prayer on a lonely mountain, or amid wild beasts in the wilderness; for love of us He leaves the Mother who nursed Him in childhood and loved Him far more than life itself; He shoulders His cross, and dies upon it in cruel torment. If we have failed to love Him in the past, because we have failed to love Him as we ought, let us make up our minds that we shall be faithful to Him for the future. "Let us keep close to Him," St. Bernard bids us, "that our hard and unfeeling hearts may be bound at last by the bond of His love and wounded by its arrows." And let us ask on this day our Lady of Sorrows to obtain for us sorrow for our sins and the grace to love the Son she gave up for us to the death of the cross, with at least some small measure of her own generous and enduring love.

IV. OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—Month of our Lady. Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

I. Our Lady's place in the plan of salvation. (a) She is the Lady—the dispenser of graces to her children. (b) God's original design concerning mankind. (c) The Fall of Man. (d) Analogy between Adam and Eve—Christ and Mary. (e) Effects of Mary's obedience: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." She became a sharer in the Incarnation.

II. Our Lady's consequent relations with us. (a) We, too, are born to grace of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary. (b) God makes His higher creatures custodians and dispensers of gifts. So the Blessed Virgin is a channel of graces to us.

III. Exhortations.—Ask alms of her. Use of "Hail Mary." Be worthy of her interest. Cultivate especially the virtue of purity.

Ever linked with the Lord of the Sacred Heart in the thoughts, and prayers, and devotions of those who love Him, is His sweet Mother, our Lady of the Sacred Heart. The first Friday of last month was a festival of this Lady under the invocation of our Lady of Sorrows. That day we stood with her in spirit beneath the cross on Calvary. Since then the Easter sun has risen once more on this sad earth of ours, and, in the liturgy of the Church as in the world around us, gloom has, for a season, given place to gladness. "For, lo, the winter is now past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers have appeared in our land; the time of pruning is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land" (The Canticle of Canticles, ii. 11, 12). It is the month of May, the month of green fields and springing flowers; it is Mary's month, for our Lady of the Sacred Heart is our Queen of the May, and every day of it is dedicated to her.

"Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us; our Lady of the Sacred Heart, pray for us," so runs the invocation in the little chaplet of the Sacred Heart. And it runs fairly on the lines of Catholic truth. The Lord of the Sacred Heart we sue for mercy; of our Lady of the Sacred Heart we beg for the boon of prayer. "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me," was the cry of the blind man of Jericho, as he sat by the wayside begging while our Lord went by. The Son of God is the Son of David because He is the Son of Mary, and because He is the Son of Mary we beg of Mary to pray for us. In becoming the Mother of God she became also the Mother of all those who are born again by baptism, children of God and heirs of His kingdom. Of the great family of God's chil-

dren, countless in their multitude, she is the Mother. Now, while it is the father of the family who finds bread for the children, it is the mother who feeds them, and it is to the mother the little ones go for bread. Mary is the dispenser of bread to the little ones of God. She is indeed our Lady—the bread-dispenser—in the good old Saxon sense of the word.

It was the original purpose of our Father who is in heaven to save His children otherwise than they are saved under the present dispensation. There was not, in fact, question so much of salvation, which implies a being made free from sin and its consequences, as of elevation to a supernatural order, a lifting up, in the first instance, from a state of nature, and then a taking up of man into the celestial paradise if he should prove faithful in the earthly one where God first placed him. Had he proved faithful there would have been no need of a Redeemer. Instead of being born as now, “children of wrath,” doomed, if not redeemed, to eternal death, men would have been by birth children of God, heirs, if they would but hold fast their heritage, of eternal life. In other words, original justice, the boon bestowed by God’s free grace on our first parents, would have come as a birthright to all their children, and the joys of heaven would have followed, without pain or hardship, as the fruit of their perseverance in that original grace. But by man’s disobedience the original plan of filling the places left vacant in heaven by the fall of the rebel host was completely thwarted. Men would now by carnal birth inherit a nature shorn of grace and stained with sin; and we know that “nothing defiled can enter” into the beatific light of God.

But if man’s perverseness in Eden crossed God’s first purpose regarding His creature, happily for us it did not close the gates of His mercy, and could not thwart His almighty will. There is a sort of analogy running through all the works of God, so that we may gather from what comes to pass in one sphere or order of being what is likely to be true in another. This analogy attests the unity of design in the world. It stamps everything in the universe with the seal of the divine handiwork; it shows that all things were planned alike by the same divine mind and fashioned by that same almighty power, “by whom were made all things, and without whom was made nothing.” We trace it in the scheme of redemption. The grace of God that was forfeited by the carnal birth from Adam and Eve should be regained only by a second and spiritual birth. “Except a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost,

he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," such is the law of the new birth in the new dispensation. One man and one woman, our first parents in the natural order, had by their disobedience merited for their children eternal death; one man and one woman, our first parents in the spiritual order, should merit for their children eternal life. When I say "one woman," I mean a merit that is, not direct and primary, but indirect and subordinate. So far as regards primary and direct merit, the new birth is to be traced to one and one only source in the one mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, for "there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved." And yet here, too, the analogy runs. For, as the disobedience of the first Eve, though it was first in the order of time, would not have lost to her children the gift of the spiritual birth had there been no demerit in the first Adam; much less would the obedience of the second Eve, though it, too, came first in the order of time, have won it back for them without the merit of the second Adam. The pleading of the blood "speaking better things than that of Abel" alone could win for men the pardon of their sins; the voice that called forth Lazarus from the tomb alone could summon men from the grave of sin back to newness of life.

Still, it can no more be denied that Mary's obedience was a factor in our redemption than it can be denied that Eve's disobedience was a factor in our fall. "As Eve," says Irenaeus, "proving disobedient, became the cause of death both to herself and to all mankind, so also Mary, having a husband foreappointed, and nevertheless a virgin, being obedient, became both to herself and to all mankind the cause of salvation" (Adv. Hear., bk. 3; c. 22; n. 4). Were it not that Eve gave ear to the angel of darkness, this earth of ours would still be the bright and happy dwelling-place that God meant it to be for man; were it not that Mary gave ear to the angel of light, we should all of us be still sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. It is literally true that the grand scheme of man's redemption hung trembling for one supreme moment upon the free act of a woman's will—the act which finally issued in words the most pregnant with meaning for mankind that ever were spoken: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word." God would not, and because He would not, could not, do violence to the nature that He himself made. The will of man and of woman He made free; and no man or woman has ever yet directly helped to carry out the purposes of God, or ever can directly serve to give

effect to His plans, without the full and free consent of that man or woman. Therefore, while it would be heresy and blasphemy to say that Mary redeemed men, it is but the simple truth to say that she gave men a Redeemer. And while she has no direct merit of right in the work of our redemption, she has a direct merit of right in the work that lies at the root of it—the work of the incarnation. For, in the strong words of the Old Roman Creed, “Jesus Christ was born of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary.” So, too, in becoming the Mother of the Redeemer, she has become the spiritual Mother of all that are redeemed. How is not the Mother of God the Mother also of all those who, by the grace of adoption, become children of God, and heirs of His kingdom, coheirs with Christ who is the firstborn among many brethren? When she begot the Son of God, when she nursed Him in helpless childhood, when she fed Him with her own milk, when she freely gave Him up, now grown to manhood and in the prime of life, to the shameful death of the cross for our sakes, then she became the spiritual Mother of as many children as “cry Abba (Father)” to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And so every child of God is also a child of Mary—“born,” in a true, but spiritual, sense, “of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary.” Hence it is that we call Mary our Mother, our Lady, and our Queen; hence it is that we, “poor banished children of Eve, moaning and weeping in this valley of tears,” cry out to her, and invoke her as “our life, our sweetness, and our hope.” Hence it is that Mary is made dispenser of God’s graces—the bountiful feeder of the little ones who cry for bread.

It is God’s way, in the order of His providence, by the hands of the higher among His creatures to dispense His gifts to the lower. So those who are blessed with an abundance of the good things of this world should, in God’s providence, share these good things with the poor and needy. Now, all those who come from Adam by carnal birth are poor and needy from their mother’s womb, shorn of divine grace—all save the sinless Virgin. Hence, it is fitting, and altogether in keeping with God’s way in other things, that grace should come indeed from Jesus as its author to the children of Adam, but through the hands of Mary. And what fulness of grace is hers to dispense! Not without reason has it been likened to the sea, which receives the waters of all the rivers that empty themselves into it, only to give them back again in dews and rains to make fruitful the earth. From the first was Mary “full of grace,”

that of her fulness we should all receive. All the countless graces which mankind lost by the sinfulness of Eve were regained to men by the sinlessness of Mary, and in more copious measure, as the need was greater, that where "sin abounded, grace should more abound." If we had inherited grace from Eve, it would have been ours as a birthright, without the asking, whereas now, being born into spiritual poverty, we are driven by stress of circumstances to beg spiritual alms of her who came into the world dowered with every grace; even as the orphan, who is left without means of support, must beg for food and shelter at the doors of the wealthy and the great.

Let us, then, orphaned children of Eve as we are, ask spiritual alms of Mary, our true Mother in Christ, our Lady Bountiful, our Queen of the May. Let us, especially during this, her month, be assiduous in the recital of the daily decade of her Rosary, which is the practice proper to the second degree of the League of the Sacred Heart. "When I say, 'Hail Mary,'" says the seraphic Saint Francis of Assisi, "the heavens bow down, the angels exult, the earth rejoices, hell trembles, and the devils take flight." Shall we not, then, greet our Mother with the angelic salutation, over and over again, uniting our voices with the consenting voice of all generations in calling her blessed? For Mary is in very truth our Mother, and such a Mother, so sweet, so winning, so loving, so tender, so full of pity for us, so powerful to help us, so patient when we are wayward, sympathizing with us, as only a mother can, in our sorrows, and rejoicing in our joys. But, bear this in mind, she is our Mother because she is God's Mother, and if we are not children of God, clients of the Sacred Heart, in more than in name, neither are we children of God's Mother, clients of our Lady of the Sacred Heart, in more than in name. "Show thyself a mother," once said a young man who honored Mary with his lips, but whose heart was not pure like Mary's heart. And he heard the answering words, it is said, "Show thyself a son." It is not enough that we call ourselves children of Mary, clients of Mary; we must show ourselves her children, show ourselves her clients, especially in this her month, so fittingly given over to her, the bright and sunny month of May. In vain shall we pour out prayers to Mary, or deck her altars with flowers, or count our chaplets in her honor, or practise any devotion, if even one sinful habit holds us in bondage and we make not up our minds to be freed from it once and for

all. There is one sin in particular, from the toils of which, if haply we have been caught in them, we should seek this month to be set free through Mary's intercession. It is a sin which a corrupt world makes little of, but which God punishes with hell-fire; it is a sin that has its roots deep in our fallen nature; it is a sin that blinds the understanding, weakens the will, and stifles every noble aspiration of the heart; it is a sin, in fine, which the saints tell us, and they know whereof they speak, sends more souls to hell than all other sins put together; need I name it? It is the sin of impurity. Oh, let us beg the Mother of fair love that she may win for us by her prayer the great gift of purity; that she may awaken in our souls a great love of purity, and a great horror and loathing of the opposite vice. Let us put our whole hearts into this petition, knowing that the salvation of our souls is at stake. For from the lips of Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, have come those words so pregnant with meaning: "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God."

V.—THE HEART OF JESUS A BURNING FURNACE OF CHARITY.

"Heart of Jesus, burning furnace of charity, have mercy on us."—Litany of the Sacred Heart.

"Behold the Heart which hath so much loved men, which hath spared nothing, even to exhausting and consuming itself in order to give them testimony of its love; and in return I often receive only ingratitude."—Words of Our Lord to Blessed Margaret Mary.

SYNOPSIS.—*The appeal of the wounded Heart of Jesus for the love of man. What are God's claims to our love? All charity is love, but all love not charity. Two ultimate kinds of love: (a) Love of God. (b) Self-love. We love God because: (a) He has been good to us. (b) Because He is so good in Himself. (c) Because He is beauty itself. So many do not love God because they have so little knowledge of Him. Example of blind man on the roadside. God must be loved with the whole heart: (a) Because it is His. (b) Because He so desires it. Sacred Heart likens this love to "fire," which ever tends upward—is a zealous element—and is ever active. Approach, then, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the burning furnace of charity.*

This plaint of the Sacred Heart seems to have an added pathos in the month that is dedicated to Him. It is the cry of a Heart that has been wounded for love of us. Let us heed the cry, and seek to make some return of love for all the love that He has lavished on

us. And because knowing goes before loving, let us first see what charity is, and what claims God has to our undivided love.

Charity is love, but not every love is charity. It makes all the difference in the world what we love and why we love it. The heart of man is made to love; love is the very life of it; yet not every love is good. Many kinds of love are bad, either because what we love is bad, or because we love it not as we ought. The love of sensual pleasure as such and for its own sake is bad, because sensual pleasure as such and for its own sake is bad and forbidden. This love we call lust. The love of money, or strong drink, or worldly glory, may be bad, and often is bad, not because money, or strong drink, or worldly glory, is bad in itself, but because we are apt to love it not as we ought; because we are apt to love it too much, waste too much of our love upon it, of that love which we should give to higher and better things. So a thing may be good, and the love of it, in a given case, bad; and this is true of every one of what we call the good things of this world.

I have said that there are many kinds of love. In the last analysis, however, there are but two; the love of God, and the love of self. "Two loves," says St. Augustine, "built two cities; one the love of God, reaching to the contempt of self; the other the love of self, reaching to the contempt of God." When a man loves money, or even a friend, for the sake of the pleasure or advantage the money or friend procures him, it is not the money or the friend he really loves at all; it is himself he loves. But suppose a man loves another because that other is good and worthy of love for his own sake; this is an unselfish love. Of this kind is charity, which is the love of God above all things, because He is so good in Himself. Not that we may not love God because He is good to us, but that we must love Him mainly and supremely because He is in Himself the fountain of all goodness.

But so selfish are we that we are drawn to God and first learn to love Him because He has been so good to us. And this is a good motive—to begin with. God has been so good to us. He has made us out of nothing, and at every moment it is His almighty power that keeps us from falling back into nothingness. He has redeemed us by the blood of His only Son. He has watched over us from the cradle with more than a father's care, with more than a mother's tender love. He has borne with us so patiently, pardoned our sins so often, returned good for the evil we have done against Him. If

we love our parents, our friends, our benefactors, how much more ought we to love God the great Father of all, from whom all fatherhood is named in heaven and on earth; God who is our best and truest friend; God who is our sovereign benefactor!

And God is so good in Himself. This is another and higher title He has to our love. Is not the good the very thing that stirs love into life? Take away the good, and there is nothing left that is lovable. Now God is goodness itself. We say of creatures that they are good; we say of God that He is goodness. All that there is of goodness, scattered with lavish hand throughout the world, in Him is gathered up into unity and exists without limit. If, then, by the first law of our being we are drawn to that which is good; if it is not in our nature to love evil as such, but only when it comes before us in the guise of something that is good; is it not plain that supreme goodness has a supreme claim to our love?

Once more, God is beauty itself. Who is there that is not enamored of the beautiful? Who, indeed, can help loving it? Beauty has a potent charm for us; it flings its spell upon us, and wins our love almost in spite of us. Men dote on nature for its beauty, and poets go into raptures over it. We hear talk of the love of nature, and even of the worship of nature. And truly there is much that is beautiful in nature, in the world around us, more especially at this season of the year. Every flower that blooms is full of beauty; there is a charm in the summer landscape, and a glory in the firmament above, where the golden sun shines by day, and the moon and stars give their light when the day is done. And man himself is not devoid of what he so much admires in nature. Fallen though he is, he still bears about him the tokens of what he was before the fall. Mere corporal beauty counts for little, even though it be made much of, but in man we may find moral goodness, which is the beauty of the soul.

Now, if these things that are in the world are beautiful after their way and in their degree, how much more beautiful is He who made them! All the loveliness of this world, what is it but a faint reflection of the loveliness that is uncreated and divine? And, then, earthly beauty at best is but a frail thing; it blooms for a brief season, then fades forever; but the divine, the uncreated, can never fade. "Too late have I known thee," is the cry that came from the heart of Augustine, "too late have I loved thee, O Beauty ever ancient and ever new!"

But if God is so good to us, and so good in Himself, nay, goodness itself and beauty, how comes it that we love Him so little, and that so many love Him not at all? This comes, in the first place, from our not knowing God as He really is, from our being blind to His goodness and His beauty. We see Him now as in a glass, darkly, nor are we at pains to know more of Him, to learn by thought and study the surpassing claims that He has to our love. We read in the Gospel how a blind man once sat by the wayside begging as our Lord was passing by. He was a type of those who are spiritually blind, who know not and love not the God of all goodness. Content with the perishable things of earth, they sit by the wayside to enjoy them, while others are pressing on toward the goal to the prize of their high calling, eager to enter and dwell in the house not made with hands. Oh, if they, too, like that blind man, would but lift their voices and cry out to the pitying Christ, "Lord, that I may see," how gladly would He open their eyes and kindle in their hearts the blessed fire He came to cast upon the earth! But men will not thus cry to the Lord; or, if they do, the cry is from the lips only, and not from the heart. They give all their love to creatures, and have none left for their Creator. "Be astonished at this, O ye heavens," says God by the mouth of His prophet, "and ye gates thereof be very desolate. For my people have done two evils. They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and have dug for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water." Thus it is; men seek to slake their thirst for happiness at the broken cisterns of this world. They have set their hearts on the things that are upon the earth. They would love God, perhaps, if only He would be content to share their love with creatures. But this He will not, can not, do. He is sovereign goodness, and must be loved with a sovereign love, or not at all.

And this brings us to another point. What must be the measure of our love for God? How great must it be? There can be no measure; He is to be loved without measure. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart. He is a jealous God, and can brook no rival. Nor can He have a rival (be it said for our comfort) save sin alone. For all love that is not sinful is good, and, in the final synthesis, goes back to its source in God Himself. For how can the love of the good but lead to God, the infinite ocean of goodness? There is never a tiny rivulet that runs but flows at last into the sea.

God wants the whole heart, because it is all His, nor will He take less than what is His own. The devil will be satisfied with a little corner of the heart—at first, for once he gains an entrance he will make it all his own. You know of the judgment of Solomon, which we read of in the Third Book of Kings. Two women came before the tribunal of this most wise King, bearing with them a child of which each claimed to be the mother. Solomon bade his attendants bring a sword and divide the child in two, giving half to the one and half to the other. Now, she whose child it was cried out, “I beseech thee, lord, give her the child alive, and do not kill it.” But the other said, “Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it.” And the King at once bade them deliver the living child to the woman who spoke first, “For,” said he, “she is the mother thereof.” And so is God the true Lord of the heart of man, for He will not have it divided.

This, then, is charity, to love God with the whole heart, that is, above all things. He does not require us to love Him more tenderly, or with greater warmth of feeling, than we love any creature; for the essence of charity is not in sensible emotion. What He requires is that we should love Him more, simply but positively more, than any other being; that we should place Him in our hearts before all that is not He; that we should give Him the preference over anything and everything that might come between us and Him, our Creator and Redeemer, our first beginning and last end. And, as I have said, sin alone, mortal sin, can set up a barrier between us and our God; and, therefore, is this the true test of charity, that we keep the commandments, for keeping these we shall not sin at any time; keeping these we give the surest proof, because practical, that God has a place in our hearts from which neither self-interest, nor the promptings of our passions, nor the blandishments of the world, nor the seductions of Satan, can ever dislodge Him.

The Lord of the Sacred Heart, who is the true lover of our souls, likens charity to a fire which He has come to cast upon the earth; nor could there be found an apter comparison. None of the common elements is so much like charity as fire is. The ancients used to think that fire is not native to the earth, that its home is somewhere in the skies, and they accounted in this way for its unconquerable tendency to soar upward, as if to seek its first home above and regain its native element. Grant that this is not true of fire, it certainly is true of charity that its home is in the skies. It is God's

own gift, coming down from heaven, and making the soul that receives it ever soar above the things of earth, and cry out with the Royal Psalmist, "Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest?" Again, fire is what we may call a jealous element; it brooks no rival; it will cease to lord it over the other elements only when it is altogether spent. So with charity; it must reign in the heart over every other love, or be utterly quenched. Once more, fire is an active element; it must be active or it will cease to be. Earth of its nature is inert; water though often in motion is found stagnant; even the fickle wind is sometimes at rest, as in a dead calm; but fire is in activity till it expires. Here again we come round to that test of true charity—good works. Are we earnest, instant in doing good? If not, the fire of charity is dying within us, or already dead. Good works are the fuel that feed it; if the fuel fail, the fire must go out.

Let us, then, when we find that the fire of charity is burning low, be it in the cold of winter or the heat of summer, come to Jesus in the Holy Sacrament, draw near to His Sacred Heart, this "burning furnace of charity," that He may warm our cold hearts and kindle in them the fire of His love. Amen.

VI. REPARATION.

"If men made me any return, what I have done for them would seem little to my heart; but they have only coldness for me."—Our Lord to Blessed Margaret Mary.

SYNOPSIS.—The Blood of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was offered for our sins and the sins of the world. By the commission of sin two things were rendered necessary: 1. The injury had to be repaired. 2. The wrong had to be atoned for. Both were effected by the shedding of the Precious Blood. Our Redeemer offered every drop of His Blood as our ransom. But strict justice requires that we should suffer, as we were guilty. By the aid of God's grace we satisfy God's just wrath. Two special means of atonement: 1. The Mass. 2. Visits to Blessed Sacrament. Earthly kings visited and courted. The King of Heaven often neglected. Visit Him and make Him your friend forever.

We invoke the Sacred Heart of Jesus as "the propitiation for our sins." St. John tells us that Jesus is "the propitiation for our sins, and not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world." He

has propitiated or appeased the Father by making reparation for our sins. St. Paul tells us that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." With His own blood it was that the Son of God effected this reconciliation, with the blood which flowed from the Sacred Heart, as from its fountain, the Most Precious Blood to which this month (July) is dedicated.

Reparation is the act of mending or restoring that which has suffered injury, and specifically, it is the act of making amends for a wrong done. In both of these senses the Son of God, who took upon Himself our nature, has made reparation. He has repaired our fallen nature and He has made amends for the wrong that sin has done and does to God. Sin from the first made havoc with our nature. The understanding of man was darkened by the fall, the will was weakened, the passions grew unruly; man, in short, was shorn of all grace and became a poor and feeble and miserable creature. The Son of God came down from heaven, and "we saw his glory, the glory as it were of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." He came with His grace to heal man's wounds, calm man's passions, strengthen man's will; with His truth to lead man forth from darkness into His own admirable light.

But sin had not only done injury to man; it had done most grievous wrong to God, such wrong as none but the Only Begotten of the Father could repair. The creature whom the power of God had brought out of nothingness and whom the goodness of God had dowered with every grace; that creature who was bound by every title of justice and by every bond of gratitude to love and serve God, turned upon his Creator and Sovereign Benefactor, spurned His command, flung open defiance in His face. The shameful wrong thus done to the God of all goodness, the wanton insult thus offered by a mere worm of earth to the Eternal King of Heaven, was at length wiped out by the blood that came from the Heart of the Son of God, the blood which is the atonement for our sins and the price of our redemption.

And of this Most Precious Blood how prodigal has the Redeemer been! One drop of it would have been enough to redeem ten thousand worlds. He shed it all, even to the last drop. Behold it ooze from every pore of His body as He lies prone on His face in Gethsemani; see it gush forth at every stroke of the scourges, redden the way up Golgotha, flow from the hands and feet and heart of Him who hangs upon the tree. The ransom is a royal one, and in right royal

fashion is it paid. None but the Heart that loved men so much could be so lavish of its blood.

This is the Blood "speaking better things than that of Abel." The blood of Abel cried from the earth for vengeance against his slayer; the blood of Christ cried from the earth for mercy to those who were nailing Him to the cross. This is what sinners are doing to this day, so far as in them lies—nailing their Saviour to the cross. And to this day, and all day long, the blood of Christ cries from the earth, from the chalice on the altar, for pity and for pardon. Would you know to what purpose, with what pleading power, the blood of Christ cries from the earth? Go back to the type and shadow of it in the Old Law and you can form some faint idea. The destroying angel is about to slay the firstborn of every family in all the land of Egypt. He sees a sign of red, the blood of the paschal lamb, on the door of every Hebrew home, and seeing it passes over, sparing the first-born that is within. So with every soul that has that sign of red upon it, the angel of darkness has no power over it; and when the angel of death summons it hence, it will wing its way to join that great multitude of all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues, who stand before the throne and in sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes and with palms in their hands.

But if the Son of God has made ample amends for sin, if He is the propitiation not only for our sins but for the sins of the whole world, what need is there of our making reparation, or why should we be asked to do so? It would seem at first sight that there really is no need. But if we look into the matter a little more closely we shall find that there is. Reparation is an act of justice, and while it is true that "in the course of justice none of us should see salvation," strict justice nevertheless requires that the one who does the wrong should repair it. Now man of himself could never repair the wrong done to God by sin. There is about sin something of the infinite, it being an offence against Infinite Majesty. Hence the Son of God alone could fully atone for sin.

But though man of himself can not make full reparation for his sins, he can do so with the help of the grace that his Redeemer has bought for him with His blood. And justice requires that he should do so, for he is the one who has done the wrong. In other words, we can cooperate with Christ in the work of reparation by the help of the grace that He has bought for us, and justice demands our cooperation. It would not be just, it would not be fitting, that He

should do everything and we should do nothing; that he, the Sinless and Most Holy, should suffer the death of the cross for our sins, and we, the sinners, whose crimes He expiated with His blood, should suffer nothing; that He should tread the thorny way of penance and our way should be strewn with roses. Therefore it is that the apostle tells us we must first suffer with our Lord if we are to be glorified with Him; therefore it is that our Lord Himself tells us we must deny ourselves and take up our cross daily if we would follow Him; therefore it is that St. Paul rejoices in his sufferings, and fills up, to use his own words, "that which is wanting of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the Church."

How, then, shall we help our Blessed Lord in this work of reparation; how fill up, in the words of the apostle, that which is wanting of the sufferings of Christ? In the first place, and as an essential condition of our taking part in the work at all, we must keep ourselves in the state of grace. Our consciences must be free at least from the guilt of mortal sin. How can the man who is dead in sin take part in any good and holy work? We must live in Christ if we would work with Christ; for, what part, says the apostle, hath Christ with Belial? If we do but keep ourselves in God's grace, however, the offering we make daily of our work, and prayers, and sufferings to the Sacred Heart of our Lord has a real value, is, indeed, of priceless worth, turning, as it does, every work of ours into a work of reparation.

But of the many ways in which we can directly cooperate with our Lord in making amends for sin, there are two that are especially pleasing to Him and of especial efficacy. These are to assist devoutly at the Holy Mass, and to visit our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. For the Holy Mass is the self-same sacrifice that was offered on the cross in atonement of sin; not another sacrifice, not a new sacrifice, but the same prolonged forever. "As the shadow is cast by the rising sun toward the west," says Cardinal Manning, "and as the shadow is cast by the setting sun toward the east, so the Holy Mass is, I may say, the shadow of Calvary, but it is also the reality." It is still the same High Priest that offers still the same Victim, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Still is the clean oblation foretold by the prophet offered on our altars from the rising of the sun to its going down. Day by day that Body is broken for us and that Blood is poured forth which blotted out the handwriting of the decree that was against us.

The Mass is over, the people go their several ways, but the Victim of the Mass remains as the Prisoner of the Tabernacle. "Lo! I am with you always, even to the consummation of the world." Here in the Sacrament of the Altar this promise is literally fulfilled. Love keeps Him our prisoner, our hostage, ever living, as in heaven so here in the tabernacle, to make intercession for us. He has so loved us as not only to die for us, but to take the form of bread that He may become the food of our souls and live ever near us and with us. Here He remains the livelong day and through the watches of the night in silence and alone upon our altars. It used to make the saints of God weep to see the courts of kings and the homes of the great ones of the earth filled with people who fawn upon wealth and flatter vanity to secure some wretched worldly favor, while the churches are deserted where dwells the King of Kings, rich in infinite and eternal treasures. Let us come oftener and with a livelier faith to visit our Saviour in this Holy Sacrament, to make reparation for our own sins and neglect, as well as for the sins and neglect of others. So shall we lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven, where the moth doth not consume and where thieves do not break through nor steal.

VII. THE HEART OF JESUS, THE WELL-SPRING OF LIFE AND HOLINESS.

"The Heart of Jesus is the first source whence flow all streams of grace."—St. Alphonsus Liguori.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—Our Blessed Lord the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Such He still is in Holy Mother Church.

1. *The Lord of the Sacred Heart the Life of those who are born again. (a) His grace the life of the soul. (b) Meaning of grace. (c) Scope and purpose of grace. (d) Different kinds of grace.*

2. *Grace in its essence and working. (a) Twofold, habitual and actual. (b) Effects of habitual grace. (c) Habitual grace short of enough. (d) The need of actual grace made plain by an illustration. (e) Gives light and strength and comfort to the pilgrim here below.*

3. *Conclusion.—(a) The one thing necessary. (b) The children of this world and the children of light. (c) "Thy Kingdom Come."*

Our blessed Lord is, as He tells us Himself, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Such He was to the men of His own day who followed His steps along the hillsides of Judea, and hung upon His lips while He told them of a kingdom not of this world, and spoke

of the living water that leaps up unto life everlasting. Such He is still to those who are one with Him in the Church in which His Spirit ever dwells, and with which He Himself, true to His promise, still abides and will abide even unto the end of the world. Not that we see Him now, as they did of old, with bodily eyes, or hear Him speak, or tread in His steps as they did. But we see Him in His Church, for she is the living body whereof He is the head, and she speaks to us with His voice, for has He not said, "He who hears you hears me"? And she leads us by the hand, as a mother her children, along the way that He has traced out for us, a narrow but a royal way, for it leads to the heavenly kingdom and was trodden by the feet of our King.

The Lord of the Sacred Heart is the life of those who are born again. He is King of a kingdom that is not of this world, a kingdom into which men are born by the grace of God. To every man, to every child of Adam, this grace of God flows from the heart of Jesus as from its fountain source. And what is this grace which makes of the child of Adam a child of God? I will try to give as clear and full an idea as I can of what it is. The more one knows about a thing so rich and rare, the more will one prize it. Grace, then, to begin with, is a gift of God, a something freely given as not being due by the giver to the one who receives it. In this broad sense of the word, everything that we are and own in the world, our very life and the means of living, is a grace; for to the goods of this world, to life itself, we have no other title than God's free bounty who gave us these things. But this broad sense of the word is not the one in which we use it now, nor is this the meaning the word commonly bears. The grace that we are speaking of, the grace of which the apostle says that it is "life everlasting," is a gift above nature, as the end for which God made man is above nature. Man was created, indeed, in the order of nature, but from the very first moment of the first man's creation God adopted him and the whole race that was to spring from him into a higher, a supernatural order. There never was a moment when man was in the natural order and destined to a natural end; he always was and always is in the supernatural order, destined to a supernatural end.

The grace, then, which flows from the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the grace which He came into this world to buy for us with His blood, is a special gift of God, a gift above nature, given to man of God's free bounty, and given, not in view of the life that now is, or for the

sake of the life that now is, but in view and for the sake of the life that is everlasting. "The grace of God," says the apostle, "is life everlasting." It is the seed which God plants in the soul here, and which, if the soil is towardly, will yield fruit a hundredfold to be garnered and stored away in a house not made with hands. What light and heat and sap, and whatever else feeds and fosters life is in this world of bodies and of visible nature, that grace is in the world of souls. In this visible world we live a corporal life; all who are children of Adam live this life, such as it is, a fleeting life liable to a thousand ills and doomed to fade away. But if we are to live the higher and spiritual life in the world of souls, the life which here is but in the germ, the life which fadeth not but will bloom forever in the paradise of God—if we would live this life, I say, we must never forget that it springs in the soul and is fostered solely by divine grace. By God's grace we are begotten into this new life, we are born again; by His grace the new life must be fed and nourished till it bears fruit and the fruit ripens and the time of the harvest comes. I am not speaking now of that grace which God gives to man for the sake of others, such as the grace He gave to the prophets of old that they might foretell the coming of the Redeemer, such grace as He gave the apostles that they should be heard and understood of all that many-tongued multitude in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost, such grace as that whereby the same apostles and many others, both before and since their time, wrought signs and wonders to prove their mission divine and their doctrine true. This is not the grace by which the soul lives. Indeed, the grace or gift of prophecy may be found in one whose soul is dead before God. I speak of that grace which God gives to each man for his own sake that he may save his own soul, that he may be freed from sin, become a child of God, and walk steadily in the way that leads to life.

Now, this grace is twofold, actual and habitual: Habitual grace dwells in the soul as an abiding quality, clothing it with the mantle of divine beauty, the wedding garment of which our Lord speaks. It is, indeed, the very root and principle of the new life in man. It is to this new life of the soul what the sap or principle of life itself is to the plant, and that which gives it all its bloom and beauty is to the flower. One who is in what we call a state of grace is so in virtue of habitual grace; one who is in mortal sin is stripped of habitual grace, or, as our Lord puts it in the parable, is without the wedding garment.

It might seem at first sight that once we have habitual grace we have all that we need to live the new life, or, as we so often say, to save our souls. What more does a tree need than that it should be rooted firmly in the ground and have in it a principle of life by which it can take up nourishment and grow and bear fruit in due season? What more needs the flower than the mysterious vital energy within it that it may bloom into a thing of beauty and fill the air with its fragrance? What more indeed! Much more, a very great deal more. It needs the air itself, and the earth in which it has its roots; it needs the dews of heaven, and the early and the later rains; it needs, above all, the light and warmth of the summer's sun. In the winter your field flower blooms no longer, nor does the tree put forth buds, deck itself with leaf and blossom, or bear fruit. And yet the principle of life is within it still, else it would never, when summer comes once more with its warm sunshine, perform the functions and bear about it the tokens of life. So it is with the spiritual life of man: it is not enough that the principle of life, that is, habitual grace, should be in the soul; there is needed, moreover, the gracious influence of God upon the mind and heart; there is need of the dew of divine mercy and the warm sunshine of God's presence in the soul, that man may perform the functions of the spiritual life and bring forth fruit unto life everlasting. Hence our blessed Lord, speaking to those who were already freed from their sins and clad in the robe of habitual grace, speaking to His own apostles, told them: "Without me you can do nothing." There is question of doing, not of being merely, and for this there is need of a new grace. Without the help of God we can not take a single step on the way that leads to life, and the help that He gives, light to the mind, strength to the will, comfort to the heart, is called actual grace. By habitual grace our Lord raises us from death to life, puts our feet in the way of salvation, and turns our faces toward the lasting city; by His actual grace He sheds His light across our path to guide us, and gives His hand, the hand of an Elder Brother, to help us over the hard places of the road and lead us into His Father's house, the home of peace and joy unending, the place of everlasting rest.

Such, then, is divine grace, the life of the soul and the strong right hand of God stretched out to guide and help us along the narrow way, to keep us from falling, to set us on our feet again if we should fall, and so to lead us through the wilderness, across the dark river, and into the promised land. All day long, from early

morn till noon, from noon till night, we are like Martha, busied about many things; but one thing is necessary, the grace of God. Men endure hunger and thirst, cold and fatigue, wear themselves out, risk life and limb, in the quest of gold. But here is God's gold, coined in the very mint of heaven, which will buy a kingdom and a throne and a crown of unfading glory, yet man will scarce put forth his hand to grasp it and make it his own. And even those whose faces are turned toward the abiding city, and whose feet are in the way that leads thither, and whose eyes catch glimpses of the light that shines there—even they are troubled and are busied about many things; but one thing is necessary, the grace of God. Men pray, even devout people pray and beg of God, oh! so earnestly, to give them this, that, and the other worldly favor, health of body, ease from pain, success in some affair of this life, good things all—but there is one thing necessary. Let us learn to ask first, last, and always for this one thing necessary, to ask it of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to cry with voice and heart the gathering cry of the League of the Sacred Heart, that the kingdom of God may come and His will may be done on earth as it is in heaven. So shall all those other things be added unto us, thrown in, as it were, over and above, and given without the asking.

VIII.—THE DIVINE MODEL OF MEEKNESS AND HUMILITY.

“Learn of me, for I am meek, and humble of heart.”—Matt. xi. 29.

“Jesus, who art meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto Thine.”—*Chaplet of the Sacred Heart.*”

SYNOPSIS.—*Introduction. The Lord of the Sacred Heart is the one perfect model of all virtues. He puts Himself before us as the pattern of meekness and humility.*

1. *Meekness curbs the passion of anger. Anger a short-lived madness. Duty of stifling it, lest it harden into hate. Jesus the model of meekness.*

2. *Humility the characteristic virtue of our Lord. Humility the child of common sense and of divine faith. It grows out of the consciousness of one's own nothingness.*

3. *Humility a hard virtue to practise, hard but necessary. A beautiful virtue—in theory. How to be humble.*

Conclusion.—Our pride dies hard. Need of perseverance. The life of the Christian a warfare upon earth.

Our Divine Lord is the one perfect model of all virtues. And yet it is only of humility and meekness that He puts Himself forward as the pattern. We should infer from this that these two virtues are especially Christlike, and especially dear to the Sacred Heart. They are near akin, twin-sisters indeed, these virtues; daughters of the mother and cardinal virtue of temperance in the natural order, daughters of the queenly virtue of charity in the supernatural order. But ours, alas! is a fallen nature. Hence these virtues are scarce to be found at all in the order of nature, in the life of the natural and unregenerate man; or, if found, they are counted failings rather than virtues, and held in contempt. He who came to undo the work of Satan and repair the ruins of the fall, came Himself in meekness and in lowliness, and did more than restore these virtues to the place of honor due to them in the order of nature. He raised them to a higher order; He set them up on a new foundation of faith and charity; He made them His characteristic virtues, and the badges whereby His followers should be known from those whom He has called “the children of this world.”

The virtue of meekness is set over against the passion of anger. It curbs the feeling of anger, as clemency checks the overt act. Anger is short-lived madness. The spirit of God bids us not to let the sun set on our anger. For, if we do, that short-lived madness will simmer down into a lodged hate, which will kill charity. Meekness forbids anger as such; charity forbids anger, not so much on its

own account, as because it leads to hatred and ill-will, and, in the event, perhaps, to strife and bloodshed. Hence our Lord says: "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment; but I say unto you that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment" (Matt. v. 21, 22).

And how meek was our blessed Lord! "Behold thy King cometh to thee, meek," is what was foretold to the daughter of Zion. And in the fulness of time, "the kindness of God our Saviour, and his love toward man, appeared" (Titus iii. 4). He who so often calls Himself the Son of Man was kindness and gentleness and meekness themselves. He was led as an innocent lamb to the slaughter, and He opened not His mouth. When His disciples would call down fire from heaven on a thankless people, He told them they knew not by what spirit they were led. He strove not, nor cried aloud, nor was His voice heard in the streets; the bruised reed He would not break, the smoking flax He would not extinguish. O Jesus, who art meek and humble of heart, make our hearts like unto Thine!

And the Son of Man, the Lord of the Sacred Heart, was lowly. He came in lowliness, not in majesty, and humility was the virtue of His predilection. Humility may be defined as lowliness of spirit. It serves to curb the natural tendency of the human will to aim at high things, at things that are above one. It lessens one's conceit of one's own powers and the overweening trust in one's own strength. When I say "the things that are above one," I mean the high things of this world; the things that are above one's natural talents or one's station in life; as when a man without natural parts and learning aspires to some position for which he is not fitted. It is not want of humility to aspire to things that are suited to our talents or our state in life, or to seek to excel in virtue, since in this latter case one's trust is not in one's natural powers so much as in the grace of God.

Humility in the natural order is born of common sense. In the supernatural order, it is the child of that faith "which worketh by love" (Gal. v. 6). The groundwork of it is knowledge of self, and of self in relation to God, our sovereign Lord. Now this knowledge is not given, save in scantest measure, by the light of unaided reason. It comes in its fulness by faith. Hence the pagans of old were all but strangers to the virtue of humility. The word in Latin has for its classical meaning lowness or baseness of mind. Far from being a

virtue, what we call humility was to them deserving of contempt. And so, in fact, it seems to men of the world to this day. They can not enter into the idea of it at all. And why? Because they lack the true knowledge of self which faith alone can give, and faith they either have not at all or it is a dim and feeble faith. The one who is without faith knows not that man is fallen from his first estate. He fails to realize that whatever of good there is in man is from God; of evil, from himself, from his own corrupt nature. He fails to realize the moral disgrace that attaches to sin. He sees not how by sin man lowers himself in the sight of God and of His angels. The sense of one's own nothingness, of one's own sinfulness, lies at the root of humility. And just in the measure that we realize our own unworthiness, our own nothingness, in the same measure shall we attain to Christian lowliness of heart.

But it is one thing to know what humility is and whence, and quite another thing to practise it. Nay, more, it is one thing to be conscious at heart of our own unworthiness and quite another thing to behave in a way befitting such a consciousness. Humility is a hard virtue to practise. Pride is inborn in our nature, and dies hard. It is a rare thing to find even among good Christians a really humble man, one who knows and feels his unworthiness and acts up to that knowledge. There is a world of latent pride in the heart of man. It lies dormant there, awaiting an occasion to call it forth. When the occasion arises people are surprised to see so much pride in one they thought so humble. Indeed, it often happens that the person whose pride is roused from its sleep is as much surprised as others; for certain forms of pride are so subtle that they lie hidden even from the unlucky owner of them.

But hard as it is to practise humility, we as Christians are bound to cultivate that Christlike virtue. "Except ye become as little children," are the words of our Master and Model, "ye can not enter the kingdom of heaven." It was for this that He, the Son of the Most High, came down from heaven that He might, by the force of His own example, teach us this most needful virtue. The lesson of lowliness is perhaps the lesson most strikingly enforced by the life of Him who was born in a stable between two animals of the stall and died between two thieves upon a cross. He well knew that this was the lesson we most needed to learn. And we must never fancy that we have learned it well enough.

And how shall we set about to learn it? We must begin by bring-

ing home to ourselves fully the great practical truth that we of ourselves are nothing. "If a man thinketh himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he deceiveth himself" (Gal. vi. 3). In the next place, we must keep always before our eyes those perfect patterns of humility, our Lord and His Blessed Mother. Lastly, we must try, in season and out of season, to perform acts of humility. Ah! just here is where we are woefully wanting, all of us. It is a beautiful virtue, humility is—in theory. There is something very winning about it. We admire it in others. It does us good to see a really humble man—or woman, for the matter of that. We should so like to be humble ourselves—were it not so hard. But when it comes to making acts of humility, we would much rather see others do these. We shrink from the abasement of it, and greatly as we admire humility, our native pride asserts itself, stiff and unbending as ever. And yet we can no more grow humble without making acts of humility than we can walk without using our legs.

As Christians, followers of Christ, we are bound to copy our Divine Model, to learn of Him who was meek and humble of heart. As children of His Blessed Mother and Handmaid, whose lowliness He did regard, we must strive to grow like her. Little by little, step by step, we can become meek and humble in our thoughts and words and deeds. We need good will and earnestness of purpose, however; we need a large measure of generosity, and we need a deal of patience with ourselves. Even when we are trying hard to practise these virtues, and thinking mayhap that we have made some progress, something will turn up to rouse the old Adam within us, and we learn to our sorrow, perhaps to our surprise, that our anger was but sleeping, and that our pride is as fresh and vigorous as ever. But we must not be dismayed. Ours was also the experience of the saints. St. Francis de Sales used to say he would be satisfied if his self-love, the sworn enemy of humility, were to die even one quarter of an hour before himself; and when he came to die, his dead body bore about it the marks of the struggle he made in life to keep down his anger.

"Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart, and you will find peace for your souls." The Lord of the Sacred Heart is the Prince of Peace. By sin and rebellion man had forfeited God's friendship and built up a great wall of division between himself and his Maker. The Prince of Peace broke down this wall; with

His own blood He "blotted out the handwriting of the decree that was against us." "God was in Christ," says the apostle, "reconciling the world to himself" (II. Cor. v. 19). Man seeks after peace; his whole nature yearns for it. Now, there is an old saying and a true one that peace is won by war. Had Adam not fallen, this priceless gift would have been ours as a birthright; for there is peace where is a tranquil conscience and no fierce, unruly passions to subdue. But what is done we can not undo. We can but take things as we find them, and make the best of them. If we would have peace, we must make war on our passions, and subdue them. But if reason, not passion, is to rule in fallen man, it must needs call in some powerful ally, just as a sovereign must do at times to put down a rebellion. St. Paul exulted in the alliance he had made, saying, "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me." When the tempest of passion arises within us, then, let us do as did the disciples on the storm-tossed ship; let us awaken with our prayers the Prince of Peace, that He may bid wind and wave be still, and there may come a great calm.

IX. THE LORD OF THE SACRED HEART, THE BREAD OF THE SOUL.

"The bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."—John vi. 52.

"The visit to the Blessed Sacrament is the practice of piety which is most characteristic of the devotion to the Sacred Heart."—Cardinal Deschamps.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—The Lord of the Sacred Heart no mere historic personage. He is the living bread that came down from heaven, and ever dwells upon our altars.

1. Our Lord present in the Eucharist really, truly, and substantially. The tradition among the Jews. Fulfilment of type and prophecy. The words of our Lord must be taken in their obvious and natural meaning.

2. Manner in which our Lord becomes present in the Eucharist. We must be guided by faith and reason, not by imagination, in dealing with this great mystery. Luther's theory of the Real Presence repugnant alike to reason and to Scripture. The word of God effects the wondrous change.

3. Analogies in nature and in grace. All analogy falls short. Faith, though the senses fail us, is enough. "He who eats of this bread shall live forever."

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of our Lord is closely bound up with devotion to the Holy Eucharist. To us Catholics Jesus Christ is not an historic personage merely. He is not simply one who, in the fulness of time, was born of a Virgin in David's city, died upon

a cross, rose again from the dead, went up into heaven, and is to come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. All this He is, indeed, but He is more. He is Emmanuel, God with us, a God who so loves us, is so enamored of us, unworthy though we are of His love, that He takes the form of bread, dwells in the tabernacles on our altars, invites those who labor and are heavy laden to visit Him here, gives His own body to be the bread of their souls, to feed them and sweeten their exile for them in this valley of tears. "He hath made a remembrance of his wonderful works; he hath given food to them that fear him." Lovers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus will know where to find this "Living Bread that came down from heaven."

The Catholic Church teaches that "in the august Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, after the consecration of the bread and wine, our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, is truly, really, and substantially contained under the appearances of those sensible things" (Council of Trent, sess. xiii., c. 2). He is truly present, that is to say, it is He Himself who is there and not some symbol or figure of Him. He is really there, that is, not merely as an object, which faith conceives to be there, and which is present only to those who have faith, but objectively present to the one who has no faith at all not less than to the one who has. Finally, He is there substantially, which means that the very substance of His body and blood is there, not merely a certain virtue proceeding from the body and blood, as in baptism and the other sacraments. It is and ever has been the faith of Catholics, the faith which they have ever been ready to die for, that our blessed Lord is as truly and as really present in the Holy Eucharist as He was in the womb of His mother, in the stable at Bethlehem, in the cottage at Nazareth, on the cross on Calvary, or as He now is in heaven on the right hand of the Father.

There was a tradition among the Jews, as we learn from their rabbis, that the promised Messiah, among other points of likeness to Moses, would be like him also in this, that He should bring down bread from heaven. It was after the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and the allusion to the bread which Moses gave in the desert that our Lord spoke to the multitude that had followed Him of the true bread from heaven that He was going to give them. "I am the bread of life: your fathers did eat manna in the desert and are dead. . . . I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever, and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world" (John vi.

48, 49, 51). And when the Jews strive among themselves, saying: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" He answers them by laying down in the form of a precept what He had already set forth: "Amen, amen, I say unto you, except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you." Let it be borne in mind that whenever any of His hearers mistook His meaning our Lord was in the habit of explaining what He meant. Thus, in John v., when He had told Nicodemus that a man must be born again if he would enter the kingdom of heaven, and Nicodemus had misunderstood Him, He at once went on to explain that the birth He meant was spiritual. Again, when He bade His disciples beware "the leaven of the Pharisees" (Matt. xvi. 6), and they took him literally, saying: "Because we have taken no bread" (Matt. xvi. 7), He at once pointed out that they had mistaken His meaning, and then they understood that leaven signified doctrine. So, John xi. 11, "Lazarus, our friend, sleepeth." "Then, therefore, Jesus said to them plainly, Lazarus is dead" (v. 14). On the other hand, when His words were rightly understood in their literal sense, and gave rise to murmurings and objections, it was His practice to stand to His words. Thus, Matt. ix. 3, He heals by miracle the man sick with the palsy to prove to the Jews, who cried out that He blasphemed in claiming the power to forgive sins, that He really had that power. And again, John viii. 56-58: "Abraham, your father, rejoiced that he might see my day; he saw it and was glad. The Jews therefore said to him: Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said to them: Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am."

Now, once grant that our Lord is really present in the Blessed Eucharist, and you have to admit that He becomes present by the change of bread and wine into His body and blood. St. Thomas reasons it out this way: A thing begins to be where it was not before, either by being brought thither or by being produced there. There is no third way conceivable or possible. Suppose you want to have fire in a room where it now is not—you must either bring it into the room from without or else make it in the room itself, say, by lighting a match. There is no third way. Well, our Lord does not come down from heaven upon the altar, nor is He brought down. I know we are apt to imagine that this, or something like this, is what happens at the moment of consecration, and you will often find it so expressed, or at least implied, in prayer books and kindred

books of devotion. But we must be on our guard not to be led by the imagination in this matter. The language of prayer books and books of devotion is not always theologically exact. If our Lord literally came down from heaven or were brought down from heaven, say, by angels, His coming down would be like His going up from the Mount of Olives, in itself a visible coming to be seen of men. Again, if our Lord came down from heaven, He would be in heaven no longer, and this is contrary to the faith of the Church, which addresses Him in the Gloria of the Mass, "Thou who sittest on the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us."

Our Lord, then, is always in heaven, yet He becomes present on the altar. And since He does not leave heaven to descend by bodily motion as He went up in the presence of His disciples, it follows that He becomes present by the change of the bread into His body and the wine into His blood, for this is the only other way He can become really present there. Hence, from the point of view of reason alone, Luther was astray when he said our Lord was present in the Eucharist by what he called impanation. Luther believed in the Real Presence, but instead of accepting the explanation which the Church gives of the way the Real Presence is brought about, he devised a doctrine of his own. Yes, he said; our Lord is there, but He is there in the bread, or with the bread. If this were so He would have to leave heaven and come down or be brought down to the altar, for there would be absolutely no other way in which He could become really present on the altar.

But not only is reason against the Lutheran and in favor of the Catholic explanation of this point, but Scripture is so in like manner. In fact, the Lutheran explanation can in no way be made to square with the clear words of our Lord as cited by the three Evangelists and by St. Paul. In Luther's theory, our Lord should have said, "With this is my body," or "In this is my body," or "Here is my body." What He did say was, "*This is my body.*" The Catholic doctrine alone fits these divine words. When our Lord, taking bread into His hands, said "This," the thing pointed out by the pronoun was simply bread. But our Lord said more than the word "This"; He said, "This is my body." If you want to know what a demonstrative pronoun stands for in a sentence of which it is the subject, you must wait until the sentence is spoken to the end. Suppose you were present at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee, where our Lord worked His first miracle. And suppose He took a vessel

containing water into His hands and said, "This is wine." You could have seen with your own eyes the water poured into the vessel, and have known that the pronoun "this" stood for water when our Lord began to speak. At the close of the sentence, therefore, you would at first have been tempted to think that our Lord, in saying, "This is wine," said what was not true. But if you tasted the wine, as did the assembled guests, you would have found that our Lord spoke the literal truth; that the word "This," which at the beginning of the sentence denoted water, at the close denoted wine. So it was at the Last Supper. Our Lord took bread into His hands, and said, "This is my body," and it was His body. The word of God is not like the puny word of man, merely significant; it is operative as well, effective, creative. It effects what it signifies. And He who sat at table there with the twelve was the word of God, by whom all things were made. And He it is who, as the great High Priest of the sacrifice of the new law, still changes bread and wine into His body and blood. At the creation of the world the word of God spoke His fiat, and things were. This selfsame word of God, now "made flesh," spoke on the sea of Tiberias to the angry winds and waves, saying, "Peace, be still," and lo! there came a great calm. Again He spoke at the tomb of Lazarus, bidding the corpse that was rotting in the grave come forth, and out from rottenness through the very jaws of death the man came forth alive and well. With God all things are possible.

In nature itself we find something very like this wondrous change of the bread and wine in the Eucharist, for are not food and drink changed daily into our own flesh and blood? But the miracle wrought at the marriage feast most nearly resembles the Eucharistic marvel. And yet there is a difference. The accidents of the water were changed as well as the substance. After the change, that which before was water had the taste of wine, and the color of wine, and all the appearances of wine. In the Eucharist, on the other hand, the accidents remain; it is only the substance that is changed. The guests at the wedding feast could tell by the taste that the water was changed into wine; we can't tell by the taste that bread is changed into the body of the Lord. Every natural faculty fails us here. We go by faith alone, and faith alone, as the Church sings in the great hymn of the Eucharist, though the senses fail us, is enough. Only faith can give us that spiritual taste which will enable us to discern, as St. Paul has it, the body of the Lord, and to per-

ceive that it is not bread, but Christ's blessed body that we feed on in this adorable mystery.

Yes; the Lord of the Sacred Heart, who dwells in our tabernacles under the lowly veil of the Eucharist, is the bread of life. All that common bread does for the life of the body, this and much more the Eucharistic bread does for the life of the soul. Bread is the staff of life. By it man lives, and grows, and is strong. So by the Living Bread that comes down from heaven the soul of man lives and grows even unto "the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ," and is strong to battle with its foes, the world, the flesh, and the devil. Sweet, too, is bread, but to the man who is hungry, may God grant us to hunger after the Bread of Life, that it may have a relish and a savor for us over all earthly food, and that we may, even in this our place of pilgrimage, "taste and see that the Lord is sweet."

X. OUR SURE REFUGE IN THE HOUR OF DEATH.

"I will be their sure refuge in life and especially in the hour of death."—Words of our Lord to Blessed Margaret Mary.

"Heart of Jesus, hope of those who die in thee, have mercy on us."—Litany of the Sacred Heart.

SYNOPSIS.—1. *Death the child of sin. Exemption from physical death God's free gift in the order of grace. How the gift was forfeited. Death the King of terrors, the bitterest of all bitter things. No one but knows something of it, no one but will taste it.* 2. *Death of the body image and symbol of another and more awful death. Sin takes away the life of the soul. Consequences of sin in the hereafter. Sinners and worldlings, fearful of these consequences, would fain rid themselves of the thought of them, or even deny the existence of them. No denying the doctrine of eternal punishment without denying Christ.* 3. *The Blood flowing from the Heart of Jesus quenches the flames of hell unto those who repent. He is the Resurrection and the Life. Knows His own, and no one will pluck them from His hand.*

"By one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death, and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned" (Rom. v. 12). It was no part of God's original purpose that man should die. He is the author of life, not of death; He is the God of the living, not of the dead. When first He made man and placed him in Eden, man had not in him the germ of death or of decay. He was dowered by grace with an undying life, and destined in the original intention

of God to pass from this world to the world that is beyond without ever tasting death or the woes and pains that herald its coming.

But that precious boon of undying life which man possessed was not his by nature. It was God's free gift bestowed in the order of grace. And God warned man to be careful not to forfeit this gift, not to eat of the forbidden fruit, for that in the day he ate thereof he should surely die. Alas for the waywardness and perverseness of the human heart even in that state of primal innocence! God's solemn warning went unheeded. The woman with unholy hand plucked the fruit from the tree, and did eat of it, and gave it to the man, who also did eat. And then the eyes of both were opened, and they saw that they were naked. They saw that they were by their own act stripped of that bright robe of grace with which God had clothed them, which they still wore in those days of guileless innocence when they needed no garment made of fig leaves to cover their shame. Now they seek to hide themselves from the face of God, but all in vain. His eye is upon them, and His voice sounds in their ears, uttering words that are fraught with woful meaning to them and to their seed forever. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken; for dust thou art, and into dust shalt thou return" (Gen. iii. 19).

From that day to this death holds sway over the sons of Adam. And how ruthless a tyrant is death, and how inexorable his sway! Strong men cower with fear at the bare thought of death; they know it to be unconquerable and they know it to be pitiless. Talk of the other evils of this life; what are they compared with this giant evil, this king of terrors? Cold and hunger and sickness are but the satellites of this dread monarch to do his bidding or give warning of his approach. Gaunt famine and pestilence and war, these are but the executioners that carry out his behests. In vain do men sue for clemency or seek a reprieve. Death knows no clemency, nor can all the wealth of this world purchase a reprieve were it but for one poor moment. Death strikes down the young man in the pride of his strength, the maiden in the bloom of her beauty. It tears the father from the bosom of his family, the mother from the arms of her children, the babe from the breast of its mother. It turns joy into blackest sorrow, and fills the whole earth with mourning and lamentation. These are not the words of rhetoric. They are but sober truth, and fall far short of the reality. There are

many sad things in this world, many bitter things, many things to bring us sorrow. But the most painful, the bitterest, the saddest of all merely physical ills is death. Who is there that knows not something of this death of the body? Who is there that has not seen and even felt the presence of this dread and awful thing? Turn where we will, it is ever before us; it beckons to us and stretches out its gaunt arms to fold us in its loathsome embrace. In youth as in old age it is ever by our side, clinging to us like our shadow, waiting but the word from Him who holds in His hands our destiny to seize upon and bear us hence. There is none of us but has been sobered and saddened at some time by the sight of death. We see those who are near and dear to us fade and droop at our side, cut off in the early springtime of life or in the full bloom and vigor of manhood or womanhood. The lips that often spoke words of loving welcome to us close forever; the eyes that beamed with kindness upon us grow sightless; the face becomes pallid and wasted; all beauty and comeliness are gone. Still we can not bear to part with our dear one, and for one and two nights we keep the dead with us in our homes. But presently decay sets in; the face is of an ashen hue, and the stench that comes forth from the corpse warns us that death is fast consummating its awful work. Then we hasten to bear the noisome thing away from our houses, and we bury it deep in the earth lest the presence of it overground should breed contagion and poison the very air we breathe.

Oh! it is a sad and awful thing, the death of the body. And yet it is but a faint image of that other death of which it is the symbol, the death of the soul. For as the soul is, beyond comparison, more noble and beautiful and precious than the body, so is the death of the soul an unspeakably sadder thing and more appalling than the death of the body. We do not see it, nor is it made known to us by any of our senses, as is the death of the body. It is a something that lies in the spiritual order beyond the ken of our gross senses, and therefore a something we find it hard to realize or bring home to ourselves. It is none the less a reality; nay, it is far more real than the other death of which we stand so much in awe, for, after all, the spiritual is the only reality. God sees it, and it has often saddened the sight of our guardian angels. Every man who is in mortal sin bears about within him something unutterably more loathsome than the corpse that has reached the last stages of corruption. It is a dead soul, dead though living still, living indeed in the flesh

and in the eyes of men, but dead in the spirit and in the sight of God and of His angels. That soul, made in God's own image, a thing of beauty as it came from the hands of God, a thing of surpassing loveliness when clothed with the grace of God in baptism, is now become foul and hideous beyond the power of the human mind to conceive or human lips to find utterance for.

Now, if life leaves the body when the soul is in that state, then that soul goes down into eternal death. I know that this is an ungrateful theme. I know that the world to-day has no relish for plain speaking on this subject, and would fain rid itself of a dread reality by ignoring it, or denying the existence of it. Even we Catholics are too prone to put away the thought of it from us; and without the pale of the Church very many who call themselves Christians and say that they believe in Jesus Christ will tell you that the belief in eternal punishment was all well enough when the race was in its childhood, but that enlightened men have now outgrown it and cast it away, as they would a worn-out garment. But the Jews of old who turned their backs upon the Saviour were honest compared with these men. When they found what He taught them on a certain occasion "a hard saying," they went their way and walked no longer with Him. One of two things: either we must hold fast this doctrine, hard and unpalatable though it is, or fling from us with it our faith in Him who died for us upon the cross. It was not the lips of prophet or apostle, though these, too, have touched upon it, which spoke the words that put before us with startling vividness as in a picture the awful reality that these men will not believe. It is from the lips of the Son of God Himself we have them, the meek and most merciful Saviour, Him who laid down His life to save us from eternal death. And it is not once only that He sets this truth before us, but over and over again, under divers forms, going out of His way, if I may venture to say so, in order to engrave it more deeply in our souls. At one time it is in the form of a parable (Luke xvi. 21). At another He teaches His followers whom they are to fear and why (Matt. x. 28). Again He insists upon the point when He warns men not to have fellowship with those who would lead them into sin (Mark ix. 42). He brings the matter up once more in the parable of the marriage feast where the man found without a wedding garment is bound hand and foot and cast into the outer darkness (Matt. xxii. 13). Finally, when He is about to quit the world, on the eve of His Passion, He

tells the fate of the man who hid the talent, and at once goes on to draw that graphic and awe-inspiring picture of the last judgment (Matt. xxvi.).

As sure, then, as Christ the Son of God is the teacher of truth, even the truth itself, so surely is there for the sinner who dies in his sin a place of torment hereafter, an outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, an everlasting fire where the worm of conscience dieth not and the fire is not quenched. These are not my words, but the words of the Saviour of men whose life-blood still will quench for as many as sincerely repent the flames that are kindled by the wrath of God. What His words reveal to us is indeed terrible beyond any other thing apt to strike terror into men, yet is it wise and wholesome to think of it from time to time. There are unnumbered souls in heaven this moment who would never have entered its gates had not the fear of hell kept them from sin, or made them to rise from sin when they had fallen, and spurred them on to bring forth fruit worthy of penance. God does not desire the death of the sinner, but rather that he be converted and live.

"I am," says the only begotten Son of God, the Lord of the Sacred Heart, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." He has conquered death, He has conquered sin, and He still achieves this victory in His members that are upon the earth. He came not to give back life to the body, which would avail but little, seeing that sooner or later it must return to kindred dust. When He did restore life to the body, it was only to show that He could restore life to the soul. He came to give life to the soul, and He is with us still, calling us to penance by the voice of His priests, pleading for us in the tabernacle, offering daily on our altars from the rising of the sun even to its going down the blood which speaketh better than that of Abel, the blood that cleanses the conscience of men from dead works that they may serve the living God. "I will be their sure refuge in life," are the words of His consoling promise to His servant Margaret Mary in favor of the clients of His Sacred Heart, "I will be their sure refuge in life and especially in the hour of death." He is the Good Shepherd who has laid down His life for His sheep. He knows His sheep, and His sheep know Him. They hear His voice, and they follow Him, and He gives them life everlasting, and they shall not perish forever, and no man shall pluck them from His hand.

XI.—THE MODEL AND PATRON OF LOVERS OF THE SACRED HEART.

“Go to Joseph, and do all that he shall say to you.”—Gen. xli. 55.

SYNOPSIS.—Looking forward to the birth of Christ. St. Joseph's name linked with the names of Jesus and Mary. 1. The Saint whose symbol is the lily. The example and patron of the toilers. Friend and father of the poor. Of royal lineage. His eulogy spoken by the Holy Ghost. His type and figure under the old dispensation. Dispenser of good things in the Kingdom of his Foster Son. 2. St. Joseph, our Patron, though silent, speaketh yet. His life a lesson to us (a) of fidelity, (b) of purity, (c) of patient toil, (d) of unselfish love and devotion to the Sacred Heart. Let us, then, go to Joseph and do all that he shall say to us.

The old invocation, “St. Joseph, Friend of the Sacred Heart, pray for us,” has been set aside, and the Sacred Congregation sanctions as the more fitting form, “St. Joseph, Model and Patron of Lovers of the Sacred Heart, pray for us.” “Ever 'gainst that season comes wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,” our thoughts naturally turn to this great Model and Patron of ours, whose name is ever linked with the names of Jesus and Mary, and by a further association of ideas, with the names of those historical towns of Palestine, Bethlehem and Nazareth.

St. Joseph, the Spouse of Mary and Foster-Father of Jesus, is made Patron of the Church Catholic, as he was on earth the guardian and protector of the Virgin and Child. The Saint whose symbol is the lily, he is the pattern of virgins. Head of the Holy Family, to whom the very Son of God was subject, he is the great model of the Christian father. A carpenter by trade, spending his days in poverty and toil, earning his bread in the sweat of his brow, he is an example to the toilers and the special patron of those who live by the labor of their hands. Fittingly, then, does the Church inculcate the practise of special devotion to St. Joseph. Not without good reason does she bid us look up to him as to a friend and father, as to one who, having himself felt the pinch of poverty and the soreness of hard labor, is the better able to feel for those whose lot in life is such as was his own.

St. Joseph descended from the Kings of Juda. But the holiness of his life conferred on him a higher nobility. Far brighter than the purple robe worn by the monarchs of that ancient line was the mantle of purity which clothed their lowly descendant, the Carpenter of Nazareth. Fairer, incomparably fairer, than their jeweled diadem

was the halo of holiness which encircled his brow. For this he is our Model, that we may copy in our lives those virtues that so endeared him to the Sacred Heart; that we stray not from the way of righteousness in which he always walked; that we, too, may love, even as he loved, that purity without which no one shall see God.

The Holy Ghost Himself it is who speaks the eulogy of this great Model of ours. It is given in two short words, but the words are big with meaning. Joseph, we are told, was a "just man." Just he was, not simply in the obvious sense of being honest, nor yet in the sense that he was naturally good, always doing what was right, in the natural order and in the eyes of men; but just in a far higher sense. He was just before his God, just in the sense of being holy, just because he always did what was right in the eyes of God and always walked in the narrow way that leads to life. Truly a model is St. Joseph for all lovers of the Sacred Heart.

The Old Covenant of God with His chosen people was a type or figure of the New. The things that happened in that olden time shadowed forth the things that were to happen in the fulness of time. And so our Model and Patron had his type or figure in one of the men of old, one who bore the same name, Joseph, the son of Jacob, whom his brothers sold into slavery, and who in time became the first man after King Pharaoh in all the land of Egypt. This Joseph also was just, and a lover of chastity; a man upright in his dealings with God and men, a good and faithful servant whom his master therefore placed over all his household. When the seven years of want which he had foretold came upon the land, he was made the dispenser of the food supplies that he had stored away in the granaries of Egypt during the seven years of plenty, and Pharaoh bade his people go to Joseph and do all that he should say to them. All this, as I have said, happened to him in figure, and did but foreshadow what was to come true of our Joseph, our Patron and the Patriarch of the New Law. Our King and Lord, speaking by the mouth of the Church, which He has made the herald of His message, bids us, too, go to Joseph and do all that he shall say to us. He Himself, this Lord of the Sacred Heart, is the Living Bread that came down from heaven, the bread of life, whereof if a man eat he shall not hunger and shall live forever. He was born in Bethlehem, which is interpreted "the house of bread," and grew up to manhood under the guardianship and fostering care of the man who passed for his father. And therefore in this man, this just man who was the foster-

father of our King, and proved himself a good and faithful servant of the Father who is in heaven, made dispenser of good things in the Kingdom of his Foster-Son, which is the Church of the living God.

So it is that we, who would be lovers of the Sacred Heart, are bidden to go to this Patron of ours in our needs, to go to him for those good things of the soul which he dispenses, and in respect of which we are poor and needy, to go to him especially in time of famine, when the seven years of plenty are past and gone, the years we spent like butterflies among earth's flowers, heedless of the higher life—when these are flown away, and there comes a time of hunger after something more satisfying than this earth can give, to go then to Joseph and do all that he shall say to us.

And what is it that our Patron says to us? Or how, indeed, can he speak to us? Though silent, he speaketh yet. St. Joseph, so far as we may gather from what is told of him in Holy Writ, was a man of few words. But the silent life of the Carpenter of Nazareth still speaks to men in a language which none can fail to understand. It has its lessons for all of us, that silent life; a lesson of faithfulness in the duties of our calling, a lesson of purity, a lesson of patient toil, and a lesson of unselfish love and devotion to the Sacred Heart. First of all, St. Joseph is the model husband and father, as the Holy Family of which he was the head, is the model of the Christian family. From early morn till night he toiled at his humble trade to support the Virgin Mother and her Child. But to him that heavy work was light and the toil sweet, for it was a labor of love. It is love alone that lightens labor; it is divine love alone, the love of the Sacred Heart, that can sweeten their toil to the laborers in the vineyard and make them bear joyfully the burden of the day and the heat. Fathers may learn from St. Joseph that they are to see in their children creatures made in God's image, that they are to love them as such, and that their first and highest and most sacred duty is to bring them up in the fear and love of God, so that they may ever remain what they became in baptism—children of God and heirs of His kingdom. Husbands may learn from Joseph how they are to treat their wives, and especially how careful they should be not to harbor unjust suspicions against them or suffer jealousy to creep into their hearts and poison their affections.

St. Joseph's life, too, teaches the lesson of chastity, of that purity of soul which is so dear to the Sacred Heart, of that cleanness of heart

without which no man shall see God. The world makes little of this virtue, but in the eyes of God it is a pearl without price. No tongue can tell how dear to our Lord are the pure of heart. "Blessed," He says, "are the clean in heart, for they shall see God." Of this virtue one may say what St. Paul says of charity: If I have faith so that I could move mountains, and if I give all my goods to feed the poor, and my body to be burnt, and have not chastity, it profited me nothing. If, then, we would overcome the demon of impurity and practise that virtue which makes the soul beautiful and has the promise of eternal life—for this is life eternal, to see God—let us go to Joseph, and let us learn of him that the first and best safeguard of purity is the love of purity—the love of the Sacred Heart and of the Virgin Mother, the mirrors of purity, and that the next safeguard is flight from the occasions of sin, from evil companions, from bad books, from all that may suggest unclean thoughts or desires.

But St. Joseph is also a model of patient toil. The lineal descendant of the princes of Juda, the man of all the sons of men who was most after God's own Heart, eked out a scanty living by the labor of his hands. He was but a worker in wood, and hired himself out for a paltry pittance daily. How different are the thoughts of men from the thoughts of God, and our ways from His ways! The world which worships at the shrine of wealth looks down upon the poor and horny-handed sons of toil. Men of means, the magnates of this world, use them simply as their instruments to amass wealth. They drive them to their work as they would beasts of burden, and often allow them out of the proceeds of their hard labor what is scarce enough to feed and clothe them. But those poor, ill-clad, often half-starved creatures are men, made in God's own image, and have souls for the redemption of which the Son of God gave out of His wounded Heart the last drop of His Blood—souls which, if these men do but bear their cross with patience, as the Son of God bore His, are likely to be far more beautiful and more precious in the eyes of God than the souls of the men whom the world delights to honor. In the instance of St. Joseph God reveals to us the dignity of labor. He teaches us that nothing so becomes a man, nothing ennobles him so, as by the labor of his own hands to earn his own living, to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow. He teaches us not to despise labor, and not to shirk hard labor, and not to murmur when we have to work hard for our living, and to be contented with our lot. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted, and blessed are the

poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. The world in the pride of its heart looks down on the working men; "hewers of wood and drawers of water," it calls them in contempt. But the man whom God has raised above the angels was a hewer of wood, and the very Son of God, the King of angels, was once known as the Carpenter's Son, and thought it not shame to be Himself a hewer of wood among men and a drawer of water.

Lastly, St. Joseph is the Model of lovers of the Sacred Heart. Of all lovers Joseph is, after the Virgin Mother, the first and greatest. He felt the throbbings of the Infant Heart in the cave at Bethlehem, while the angels sang their song of gladness, and how often during the halcyon days that followed, and in the course of that long journey soon after into Egypt, and the years of the silent sojourn in that land, did the Heart of the Christ-Child beat against his own! Such an unselfish love as Joseph's never was, and so constant, so unfailing. The very thought of it should shame our selfishness, our inconstancy, our lack of true love. Let us, then, go to Joseph and beg of him to prove himself to be indeed our Patron, as he is our Model; to beg of him to take pity on our poverty, and out of the treasury of the Sacred Heart, whence he dispenses treasure, to bestow upon us the golden gift of divine love.

XII. GRATITUDE TO GOD.

"And Jesus answering, said, Were not ten made clean? and where are the nine? There is no one found to return and give glory to God, but this stranger."—Luke xvii. 17, 18.

SYNOPSIS.—Introduction.—Gratitude to God a duty. The theme a timely one. 1. Gratitude is thankfulness for kindness shown or favors received. God has as many titles to our gratitude as He has bestowed benefits upon us. 2. God's benefits to man of a twofold order: (a) natural, (b) supernatural. Those of the natural order, great as they are, nothing to those of the second and higher order. 3. Ingratitude a crime, and a crime especially hateful alike to God and man. Makes the fountains of divine mercy cease to flow. Let us, therefore, cultivate a deep sense of gratitude. Ways of proving ourselves grateful.

Conclusion.—Another milestone in life's journey passed. Time short, eternity long. Let us keep in view our last end, the goal of life's journey, and walk in the narrow way that leads to life.

Gratitude to God is a duty, but a duty that is apt to sit lightly on us. We are too prone to be unmindful of this duty that we owe to God. The theme seems a timely one to dwell upon on this first

Friday of the month, which happens also to be the first day of the New Year.

Gratitude is thankfulness for kindness done to us or favors received. It is a virtue which disposes us to an inward sense as well as an outward acknowledgment of benefits bestowed upon us. Let us examine the claims that God has to our gratitude, how far we satisfy these claims, and in what ways especially we can best show our thankfulness to the Lord our God.

God has as many titles to our gratitude as He has bestowed benefits upon us. And how manifold these benefits are and how great! Out of the endless number of possible creatures He has been pleased to single us from eternity and to create us in time. And He has not only given us being which we have in common with the pebbles upon the sea-shore and the dust beneath our feet, but He has given us life, and sense, and reason; and He has given us free-will, the regal gift of choosing our own way and shaping our own course. He has made us a little less than the angels, but greater, past all measure greater, and more noble, than any other creatures in the wide world. "Let us make man to our image and likeness, and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth, and every creeping creature that moveth upon the earth" (Gen. i. 26). All things He has made for the use of man; the earth and the sea to yield him a livelihood; the sun to shine upon him by day, and the moon and stars by night; the whole world to be his dwelling-place. And not only has He given us being and life, but He keeps us day by day and hour by hour from lapsing into the nothingness out of which He first took us. And He watches over us with fatherly love, supplying all our needs and shielding us from harm. Marred with sin as man's nature is, shorn of much of its freshness and beauty as is the world on account of sin, yet who that has eyes but may see, if he will but cast them about him, with how lavish a hand God still pours out His bounties on man and scatters His blessings over all the earth!

These are some of God's gifts to us in the order of nature. But they are as nothing compared with what He has done for us in the order of grace. Not only has God given man the earth to dwell in and the good things of the earth to enjoy. He has raised him, and that from the very first, to the supernatural order, dowered him with graces, adopted him as His son, made him heir of His own heavenly kingdom, and there prepared for him things that it hath not even

entered into the heart of man to conceive. And when, in spite of this, man proved unfaithful and ungrateful, yet did not God abandon him, but "so loved the world as to send his only Son, that all who believe in him should not perish, but should have life everlasting."

And this Son of God and Saviour of men, what has He not done for us? While yet on earth He spent Himself for us; prayed, and fasted, and wept for us; became for us a reproach among men and the outcast of the people; bore our sins in His own body on the cross and poured out His heart's blood for us. And His benefactions are unto all nations and for all time. Is our cross heavy? He has gone before us bearing a cross by the side of which ours must seem light indeed. Are our souls tossed about as on a sea of trouble? We have but to awaken Him with our prayers, as the disciples did upon the lake, and once again are the wild waves stilled and there comes a great calm. Are we in sin? His Blood pleads for us in the Holy Sacrifice; His Heart is ever living to make intercession for us; in the tribunal of penance the hand of His priest is raised to absolve us as often as we kneel there with a contrite heart, and the decree that was against us is blotted out, even unto seventy times seven times. Nay, He gives us Himself, Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, in the Holy Eucharist, denying Himself to none, giving Himself to the lowliest of the lowly, to the sinner even as to the saint, with a forgetfulness of self and a disregard of His own dignity almost past belief; with a divine generosity matched only by that of His Father in heaven, who maketh His sun to rise on good and bad, and raineth on the just and the unjust.

Not without reason, then, does God ask by the mouth of His prophet, "What more could I have done to my vineyard that I have not done to it?" Let us see to it that the words of reproach that follow apply not to us: "I have brought up children and exalted them, but they have despised me. The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib; but Israel hath not known me and my people have not understood" (Isa. i. 3). Ingratitude to man is a crime; we speak of it as base and black. What must ingratitude to God be? St. Paul counts it one of the worst sins of the pagans of old that whereas they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God or give Him thanks. What are we to think of conduct such as this in the case of Christians? Of the ten men that our blessed Lord healed of leprosy, on a certain occasion, but one came back to thank Him, whereat He was pained and expressed surprise. How often

has He healed us from the leprosy of sin, and then fed us with His own body! Have we given thanks as we ought? I have seen persons receive Holy Communion and then walk out of the church without one word of thanksgiving. This is worse than ingratitude; it is want of faith, or at any rate a thoughtlessness amounting to contempt of our divine Lord. Let us not show ourselves unmindful of God's surpassing gifts; let us not despise Him. The ingratitude of men dries up the fountains of God's goodness, or rather it makes them cease to flow. If we prize not His gifts, if we show ourselves unthankful, He will take His gifts from us and bestow them on men who will know how to appreciate them.

Let us, then, cultivate in our hearts a deep and abiding sense of what we owe to God. Let us prove our gratitude by keeping His holy law, by avoiding sin, for every sin, but especially mortal sin, is rank ingratitude to our Creator and our Saviour. We can show our gratitude, too, by assisting often and devoutly at the Holy Mass, which is called the Eucharistic Sacrifice because it is a thanks-offering to God, and the only adequate thanks-offering that we can make. Lastly we can show our gratitude by carrying out more faithfully the practices of the League of the Sacred Heart. It was especially for this that our Lord wished Blessed Margaret Mary to organize the devotion to His Sacred Heart, that reparation might be made for the ingratitude of men.

To-day we begin a new year. We have passed another milestone in the journey of life. It is a solemn day this, a day for solemn thoughts. Time is short, we have not here a lasting city, and for the brief space of our sojourn on this earth our hold upon life is uncertain—such is the solemn lesson of the swiftly flowing years. God grant that we may all of us lay this lesson seriously to heart. On this day of all days it should come home to us more forcibly and with a keener sense of how much there is at stake. Time is short, eternity is long. How many members of this league a year ago to-day set out anew with us on life's journey and have since dropped out of the ranks and fallen by the way! They set out hopefully, looking forward, perhaps, to many years of life. But death laid his chill hand upon them, and the place that once knew them now knows them no more. Their bodies lie in the cold earth or under the sobbing sea; their souls have gone up before the Great White Throne to render an account of deeds done in the flesh. Such is the tragic story of human life, the same year after year, fraught with mean-

ing for us who still have our feet on the highroad with our faces turned toward the setting sun. But too often we fail to read the meaning of life's story. Too frequently we lose ourselves in the things of time. To too many of the children of men is this world all in all, and eternity but an empty dream. Let us at least make up our minds not to lose sight of our last end. Let us never forget that time is short and eternity is long. The thought will be as a light to guide us in the narrow way, the way of peace in the life that now is, the way that leads to God and perfect bliss in the life that is to be.

BX 2157 .M2 1904 SMC

MacDonald, Alexander,
1858-1941.

The mercies of the
Sacred Heart : twelve
AWU-0120 (mcab)

